Saturday Review of Literature

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Elliot Paul, author of "A Ghost Town on the Yellowstone." *(See page 6)*

The Making of American Literature

By HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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This Week

July 24, 1948

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TRADE Winds

CHOSEN AT RANDOM

A VITAL IF UNPUBLICIZED bureau during World War II was the office of Scientific Personnel, which maintained in Baltimore a minutely classified list of the half million top scientists of America, with their various qualifications for specific tasks. The records were kept via the International Business Machine Company's complex system of punched cards, which enabled authorities to come up with the right man for any sort of task in jig-time.

The degree of perfection attained by the IBM system is exemplified by this story, a top secret until the war's end. In a crucial moment, the specialist who had been heading a most important experiment for the Department of Agriculture dropped dead. The Department despaired of finding another to replace him, but turned to the office of Scientific Personnel for help. In fifteen minutes that office produced ten thousand cards in the broad classification required. There were no names or addresses on these cards; merely code numbers and marks. A half hour later the operator had narrowed the choice to six cards. He studied them carefully, and selected one, which he handed to the anxious representatives of the Agriculture Department. "I believe this is the man you are looking for," said the operator. They looked up the name—and found that the one card selected from a half million referred to the man who had just died!

The ultimate choice was made from one of the other five cards—and the almost uncanny accuracy of the IBM process proven for all time. . . .

RAY MILLAND WAS PLAYING the part of an aviator in a picture being filmed in Texas when a licensed pilot invited him for an actual flight while the company was knocking off for lunch. Three thousand feet up the pilot suddenly gasped, "My God, we haven't any gas." "Don't worry about me," Milland assured him. "I've got this parachute strapped on, and I can always bail out." The pilot managed to make a landing, however—which was a good thing, because Milland's "parachute" turned out to be a useless package from the prop department. . . . Columnist Bill Cunningham recalls the day when he was a "useless package" on the bench of the Dartmouth football team—an insignificant sophomore center on a championship aggregation. Dartmouth had run roughshod over a weak Norwich team, and in the fourth period, with the score about 60 to 0, the Big Green coach sent in his fourth-string lineup. Cunningham, playing in his first varsity game, felt full of beans, and breathed defiance to the Norwich captain. "Aw, shut up," responded that disconsolate young man. "If you were any good you'd have been in here long ago." . . .

IN HIS SALAD DAYS, Sinclair Lewis toiled a short while for the Associated Press, where he differed frequently with the manager of his branch on what constituted a good news story. Furthermore, he differed very loudly —and within earshot of the manager. No oracle was required to predict the result. Young Lewis was told one evening, "The boss is looking forward to the pleasure of throwing you out of the office tomorrow morning. Why don't you beat him to it and resign tonight?" Lewis recalls, "I walked in languidly, and drawled, in the grossest imitation of English novels, 'My dear fellow, I do hope I shall not inconvenience your little staff too much, but I really must sever my connection here. The literary standard is too shockingly low, old boy'." The manager, a Southerner, exhibited neither the consternation nor rage that Lewis hoped for. He sighed gently and said, "Ah'd give a lot to know who told you Ah was goin' to fire you!" . .

A WELL-MEANING LADY at a dinner party once mistook Julian Hawthorne, a novelist himself, for his famous father, Nathaniel. "I've read your 'Scarlet Letter'," she told him happily, "and I think it's the most remarkable novel you've ever written." "It most certainly is," agreed Julian Hawthorne, "and the most remarkable thing about it is that it was written when I was exactly four years old." . . . In his "Native American Humor," James R. Aswell has revived the story of the great Indian Chief Sitting Bull, who was finally captured after three decades of out-maneuvering the best that the U. S. Army could send int the field. His captors treated him with the greatest respect, and one asked if he had any special grievances to air. Sitting Bull nodded gravely, and protested, "One white man has printed terrible lies about me for all world to read." "What did he say?" asked the reporter. Chief Sitting Bull gave vent to an impressive collection of bilingual cuss-words, and concluded, "If Indian ever find him, he sure scalp s.o.b. say Sitting Bull graduated at West Point!" . .

FASHION NOTE: Guy Kendall, well-loved book buyer at McClurg's in Chicago, bemoans the fact that book

"Testing! Testing! Matthew . . . Mark . . . Luke . . . John . . . Testing!"

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"Listen, Barbara, who's driving this car—you or your mother?"

publishers no longer sprout chin whiskers. The only beaver in the crowd today adorns the countenance of Will Donahue of M. A. Donahue & Co. "When I was a boy," reminisces Guy happily, "a publisher without a decent set of whiskers was considered a rank apprentice." Guy speaks with great authority, because he has held down a job with McClurg's for exactly forty-seven years. McClurg found him hiding his light in a bushel of corn shucks in Naperville, Ill., and started him wrapping parcels with three other fledglings named Jim Crowder, Gus Gehrs, and Arnold Monk. The first salesman Guy encountered was young Mel Minton, who then represented Scribner's. "Mel didn't exactly sell me," says Kendall. "He hypnotized me. The books I bought in one half-hour session kept arriving in full freight-car lots for the next six months." . . . Kendall's eye for beauty remains unimpaired. When last seen he was shepherding a ravishing damsel whom he identified as Alice Hudelson, "editor of the *McClurg Book News*." The lady acknowledged the identification, and added, "I also sell advertising. Sign here." I signed. . . . SHAGGY DOG STORY: A Heritage Press ad for its excellent Jean Hersholt translation of the "Stories of Hans Christian Andersen" avers, "Two Great Danes have collaborated to produce this wonderful set of books." . . . FINANCIAL NOTE: The American Library Association wound up its Atlantic City convention with a banquet at the Ambassador at four dollars a plate. In an adjacent suite the Master Plumbers of New Jersey were holding merry wassail. *Their* plate charge was *ten* dollars. . . .

H. G. WELLS SPOKE in Boston one evening, and later attended a reception at the home of the mayor. When he left, he took the mayor's hat by mistake, and didn't discover his error until he reached Buffalo. He toyed with the idea of returning the hat, but after admiring himself in the mirror, decided to send the following note:

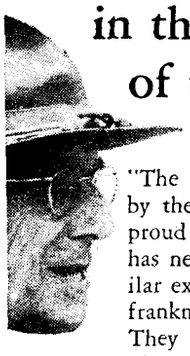
Dear Mr. Mayor:
I'm afraid I've got your hat. I like it so much that I propose to keep it. I shall long remember you, your madeira, and your fine, hospitable city.
I take off your hat to you, sir.
Sincerely,
H. G. Wells. . . .

A CUSTOMER WROTE TO Stanley Marcus, of the fabulous Neiman, Marcus store in Dallas, "I have been receiving beautiful and expensive brochures from you at regular intervals. It occurs to me that you might divert a little of the fortune you must be spending for this advertising matter to raise the salaries of your more faithful employees. For instance, there's an unassuming, plainly dressed little man on the second floor who always treats me with extreme courtesy when I visit your store, and generally persuades me to buy something I don't really want. Why don't you pay him a little more? He looks as though he could use it." A few days later the customer received a courteous reply from Stanley Marcus. "Your letter impressed us so deeply," he wrote, "that we called a directors' meeting immediately, and thanks solely to your own solicitude, voted my father a twenty-dollar-a-week raise."

BENNETT CERF

J. P. MARQUAND says:

"There will be nothing like them in the literature of this war . . .



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The Saturday Review
of Literature

The Making of American Literature

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

Henry Seidel Canby

THE literary history of this nation began when the first settler from abroad of sensitive mind paused in his adventure long enough to feel that he was under a different sky, breathing new air, and that a New World was all before him with only his strength and Providence for guides. With him began a new emphasis upon an old theme in literature, the theme of cutting loose and faring forth, renewed, under the powerful influence of a fresh continent for civilized man. It has provided, ever since those first days, a strong current in our native literature, whose other flow has come from a nostalgia for the rich culture of Europe, so much of which was perforce left behind.

It is not surprising that our own writers in the first three centuries of New World history were more often purveyors of this nostalgia than recorders of the new warmth of the American imagination kindling in novel scenes. They believed that their mission was to be importers and middlemen for America of this European culture. They encouraged nostalgia, even while spreading civilization, and they were often insensitive to the effect upon the imagination of the new subject matter of experience developing upon this continent with extraordinary rapidity and force.

Yet the literature of the new nation was to be shaped more by a hope for the future than by a clinging to the past. Observers from across the seas have noted from the beginning the buoyancy of our writing, its richness in spiritual conflicts, carried in such great writers as Poe and Melville to the bounds, and beyond the bounds, of neuroticism. They have been impressed by the vigorous self-assertion, expressed in the lesser men as naive pride. The slow emergence of an articulate racial mixture—a race of races as Whitman called it—had deeply interested them, for this was an experience not known in Europe since the Roman Empire; and they have seen that the remark of Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur, one of our most sympathetic immigrants, was true: English dogs after two or three generations in the new land became in habits and experience American, and so it was with men and with literature.

The first historians of American literature wrote of it as if they were describing English flowers and trees transplanted into a new environment. A later school discovered its democratic, psychological, and economic differentiations, but in their zeal for argument and their eagerness to establish our originality, they often left unemphasized the timeless values in our writing. The Jeffersons, the Mark Twains, the Whitmans, emerged from

Walt Whitman incited the bird of freedom to soar—but "insisted we should absorb, not discard, our European past."

the criticism of these historians with new depths of national significance; the Poes, the Hawthornes, and all writers who were primarily artists lost definition whenever their merits did not depend upon the peculiar circumstances of American history.

The time has now come, and the materials of research and criticism are available, to strike a balance which should make possible a new and truer picture of our literary tradition.

IT is, of course, quite possible, and indeed necessary, to write of American literature in terms of its European, and especially its British, sources. That was the way in which Longfellow viewed our literature, the way in which Howells seems to have felt that it could be best understood. It was the approach of teachers, critics, and historians in general until our 1920's. From the academic point of view, American literature was simply a hoped-for extension of the great literature of the English-speaking peoples. And so it is, and such a history, as far as it goes, is entirely valid. Even the radical Walt Whitman insisted that in this new continent we should absorb, not discard, our European past. We could not discard it, if we willed to do so. The progenitors of our literature are in a European and usually in an Anglo-Saxon past. Chaucer, Shakespeare, the folk ballads, the great religious literature of the English seventeenth century are as deep in our ancestral strain as in the genealogy of modern British writing. The English eighteenth century, English romanticism, the English novel of character, and all later and vital English literature have a family resemblance to ours, and a family influence, with which any other source for the American imagination outside our own terrain is by comparison weak indeed. A history of American literature exclusively in terms of democracy or the frontier is as false as is a history of American writing as a colonial extension. There is a blending of elements in our culture as

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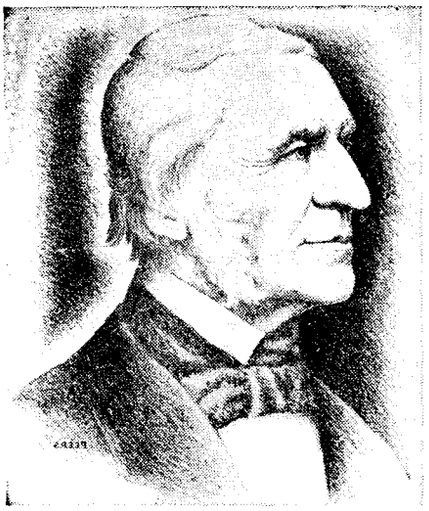

—*Frank W. Peers.*

There is the "shrewd saintliness of Emerson, who spiritualized expansion" . . .

inevitable in a newspaper editorial as in "John Brown's Body" or the "Song of Myself."

Obviously, our literature is a *transported* European culture, bringing with it the richness of its sources in the classic world, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. Obviously, the roots of our literary culture reach down into British literature which itself has absorbed so long and so much. Yet it is equally true that our literature is a *transformed* literary culture. It has been written in a new continent, and under conditions definitely and impressively different in the vast majority of instances from the circumstances of Great Britain, or of Europe in general. Slowly, yet inevitably, it has found its own accent, as has American speech. But the divergence has been much greater than between American and British habits in the use of the English language, because literature is speech made expressive of values, and the values, the expectations, the experience of life in America have been different from the beginning, with a difference that would continue to increase were it not for the influence of America upon Europe, now beginning to make itself strongly felt.

PROGRESS, for example, as a concept may have little general validity but whether we call it progress or change or development, increasing power and vitality are extraordinarily characteristic of the American nineteenth century. Never in history has nature been so rapidly and so extensively altered by the efforts of man in so brief a time. Never has conquest resulted in a more vigorous development of initiative, individualism, self-reliance, and demands for freedom. Never have the defeats which preceded and accompanied this conquest of nature led to more surprising frustration, decadence, sterility, and dull standardization. All this is in American literature, and the causes of both our successes and our failures are implicit, and often explicit, in our early national books. James Fenimore Cooper, for us, is more significant than Sir Walter Scott, although it is only rarely that he equals him as a novelist. Melville and Whitman mean more to the American and are more revealing for our own times than Thackeray and Wordsworth, although the English writers may have more often mastered their themes.

The mobility of the Americans throughout their history has been another transforming factor in their life, and therefore in their literature. They moved across a continent, and continue to move, from habit as much as necessity. And, although their speech is English and their political and social organization largely Anglo-Saxon, they have assimilated millions whose cultural background was not English at all. Tradition in America is not the same as tradition in Europe. Our national tradition has been acquired by study and by imitation as often as by childhood inheritance of an environment. Thus the relation of what is called the American way of life, which really means the American way of thinking and feeling, to the national unity is extremely important. It *is* our national unity—which does not, and cannot, depend upon blood or upon race or upon inherited tendencies. Thus very naturally our literature, which is a record of our experience, has been deeply, often subconsciously, aware of its responsibility in the making of a nation from a complex of races in voluntary union. It has been an inquiring, an exploratory literature from the beginning—asking questions of the New World, challenging the effects of sudden release and expansion upon the spiritual nature, delighting in adventure, whether along the Indian borders, or on the Mississippi, or in the trek across the continent, easily elated in a Whitman, easily depressed in a Hawthorne or Poe. All this has been transforming, and has given to American writing, even to American style, qualities which no merely Aristotelian criticism, no study of literary influences from abroad, can explain. Our contemporary literature, which, from comic strip to epic poem, is the adult education of most Americans, is to be rightly understood only by those who have followed the history of this American tradition.

THE reader who is neither a critic nor a specialist in scholarship is probably more interested in the literature itself than in the vast historical changes which it reflects. Fortunately for him, American literature is old as well as new and not merely in a state of becoming. Our national history is already long enough to have had its periods of maturing when the imagination has come to fruit. We do not have to leave him confused and bored by writing in which imagination is only half-formed and half-worded. We are not dependent upon the topical and the timely, the imitative or the unconsciously intuitive, upon the half-gods of journalism, or the sprawlings or conventions of experimental or commercialized fiction. These are all in the background, but we have had a sufficiency of great writers representative of whatever in our history could at that time and by them be put into the forms of art. The approach can now be made through the varied and extensive experience of a national culture on its way, but the objective of a history must be to record and explain the great men and women who have made this culture speak to the imagination. Literature as they have written it is any writing in which esthetic, emotional, or intellectual values are made articulate by excellent expression. It must be the record of man made enduring by the right words in the right order. It is a feeling or thought which, by some inner necessity, has created for itself a form. Literature can be used, and has been magnificently used by Americans, in the service of history, of science, of religion, or of political propaganda. It has no sharp boundaries, and passes through broad margins from art into instruction or argument. The writing or speech of a culture such as ours which has been so closely bound to the needs of a rapidly growing, democratic nation,

(*Continued on page* 29)

. . . "and Emily Dickinson, who saw eternity through the windows of Amherst."

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Personal History. *P. T. Barnum's "Struggles and Triumphs" of 1873 is surely number one among neglected American classics. Barnum pithily describes his memoirs as "recollections of what I have been, and seen, and done," and continues: "It is the . . . review of almost half a century of work and struggle . . . the story of which is blended with amusing anecdotes, funny passages, felicitous jokes, captivating narratives, novel experiences, and remarkable interviews." This might be a partial description of Elliot Paul's latest book, reviewed here. Whether he knows it or not, Mr. Paul has revived a lusty American tradition, largely Western in origin. His book reminds one not only of Barnum, but of Davey Crockett, George Washington Harris, Artemus Ward, Mark Twain himself in his Western moods. Look over last year's "Native American Humor," edited by James R. Aswell, and see if you don't agree.*

Trembles in Montana

A GHOST TOWN ON THE YELLOWSTONE. By Elliot Paul. New York: Random House. 1948. 341 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by STANLEY VESTAL

ELLIOT PAUL is noted for his books about places. His "Life and Death of a Spanish Town," and his book of memoirs of a New England boyhood, "Linden on the Saugus Branch," are both fine of their kind, and "The Last Time I Saw Paris" needs no bush. He is a grand storyteller who can in a single chapter make the reader feel that he thoroughly knows and is at ease with two dozen new characters at once. His latest book, "A Ghost Town on the Yellowstone," is based on several adventurous months he spent in the American Northwest, and is centered on the story of a town and its people in Montana at the beginning of this century—a town named with the French word *trembles* after the quaking aspens there.

That Montana town of which he writes had a varied, though small, population — Chinese, Blackfeet and Sioux Indians, saloonkeepers, scissorbills, "soiled doves," ranchers, cowpunchers, railroad men, contractors, Wobblies, Bohunks, several English clergymen and a Roman Catholic priest, gamblers, murderers, bandits, rapists, dicks, foolish women and stupid men, and among these a great many likable, amusing, and delightful people.

There is the colorful figure of a second-rate actor—perpetually at liberty—Alanson La Rue, whose wife had innocently committed bigamy with the barber during one of her husband's prolonged absences. La Rue delicately compelled his wife to return to him and every day submitted his jugular vein—as well as his beard—to the tender mercies of the livid barber's razor. Between shaves, he recited Shakespeare and Joe Miller to the local school.

We share the author's amusement at the agonies of Cora, the Mennonite farm girl—for whom La Rue had bought a lottery ticket—when she finds six matched sapphires in the crop of the prize turkey, and was put to her prayers on bread and water over the beauty of the sapphires and La Rue's elegant manners.

The author occasionally feels free to interpret his materials with a frank insouciance which inspires confidence in his understanding of what he has witnessed. His interest in his former fellow-townsmen is a continuing one, and he tells us in the end what has become of those he can trace, quite in the manner of a Victorian novel. Yet we find these asides quite engaging, because they are so true and genuine. We feel that Elliot Paul is not just concocting so many pages of another book.

Not infrequently the author spots his own narrative with saucy bits quoted from the local papers of Trembles. And indeed his book at times seems perfectly adapted to readers who can't absorb anything longer than a short piece in a tabloid. The book will certainly appeal strongly to what one may call the vaudeville mind—the kind of mind that lacks powers of concentration and prefers a new sensation and a new subject every five minutes.

Yet the author has enough philosophy behind his puppets to give the more deliberate reader plenty of food for thought and for thoughtful feeling. Elliot Paul has more than tolerance—ignoble word. He has compassion. And in this he truly reflects the Plains—the West—the last frontier—where humor was generally good humor, and satire to this day has never

THE AUTHOR: Elliot Paul is big and bearded and lives with gusto. In 1907, aged sixteen, he shunned a ceremonious sheepskin at Malden, Mass., High for woollier adventure in Montana with the U. S. Reclamation Service, recalled in "A Ghost Town on the Yellowstone." The next year he dismissed further formal education at the University of Maine to be irrigation surveyor in Idaho and Wyoming. "What I Like About the South," just finished, reminisces about Louisville in 1909. He was building a high dam near Boise in 1910, will add that to his autobiographical Items on the Grand Account Series. Along with youthful memories of the Massachusetts Legislature reported for a state syndicate; World War I sergeantship; the Paris expatriate paper *transition* he founded in 1927 and co-edited, and Madrid, with the Republican Interior Department. Also to be accounted for are "bohemian life on Beacon Hill" and Hollywood, where since 1940 he wrote scripts for "A Woman's Face," "Rhapsody in Blue," the documentary "Our Russian Front," among others ("The difficulties can't be exaggerated"). He has had eighteen books published: impressionistic novels and gay whodunits, last year's New England boyhood recollections "Linden on the Saugus Branch"; "The Last Time I Saw Paris," a valentine to the days when—and after—he was AP Ruhr correspondent, then *Chicago Tribune* and *New York Herald* literary editor (1925-26, 1930); "The Life and Death of a Spanish Town," idyllic, civil-war-demolished Santa Eulalia in the Balearics. He's a pianist, accordionist, and novacordist, has played boogie-woogie to bravos at New York's Cafe Society Downtown, likes bebop but doesn't attempt it. "I never felt very much at home in California," he admits from a Rhode Island retreat. "My No. 1 choice is Madrid—without Franco." He avoids material ties, is happiest eating, drinking, and "doing what seems best at the spur of the moment. . . . I don't limit myself in any way." —R. G.

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found a home. This quality, never obtruded—because the author and his characters take it for granted—gives the book a quality serene and tender as a prairie sunset and raises it as an adventure of the spirit far above the commonplace, sensational, and even sordid events described. All this is explicit, yet never spoils the fun. There is plenty going on, and no moral is forced anywhere.

We are hurried through an engaging series of surprising, touching, and funny situations which by their sheer irrelevance and human nature make us aware of the setting, the full atmosphere, and individual reactions to these. The book starts with a stage-coach ride during which, although people leave and board constantly, the number of passengers always remains thirteen. We fight through a bitter blizzard, labor troubles, and matrimonial adventures by mail. We watch a cure for scorpion bite with baking soda and powdered cement. We meet swindlers, attend dances on Saturday night, camp with the contractors, and learn about Old Knick and the Monkey Ward wife. We see some of our friends in the pest house disfigured with smallpox. The book ends with an epilogue on the theme that man must work with nature and not try to make her work according to his theories — the town of Trembles, like many more, is ruined by the drought.

The author holds that our Western pioneers, like our soldiers, accomplished what they did "because they were gay and abandoned whenever possible, and formed the protective habit of covering their justifiable fears with a jest, and meeting life or death, success or temporary failure, with a glint of mirth, defiant, in their eyes."

Mr. Paul writes with such verve and selects his materials so carefully for their value as color and incident that at times we wish he had more story.

Though he leads us from one high spot to another, the view from each is fine, racy, and also informative. He is really bitter about only one thing —the misleading, optimistic publicity and advice with which the railroads lured unsuspecting settlers into that bleak land.

"A Ghost Town on the Yellowstone" takes its place with Angie Debo's "Prairie Town" and Marquis James's "The Cherokee Strip."

Stanley Vestal is the pen name of Walter Stanley Campbell, director of courses in professional writing at the University of Oklahoma. His latest book, "Warpath and Council Fire," was published last month.

Golden Time

STILL GLIDES THE STREAM. By Flora Thompson. New York: Oxford University Press. 1948. 233 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by PAMELA TAYLOR

"LARK Rise to Candleford," Flora Thompson's memorable autobiography, has, in "Still Glides the Stream," an equally delightful companion piece. Miss Thompson has contrived a felicitous frame for this new picture of an English village in the 1880's. Charity Finch, a successful, middle-aged school teacher, has come back to stay for a few days in the little Oxfordshire village where she was born. Her own family have all died, or moved away, and there are not as many familiar faces as she had expected, but the cottages, some of them in ruins, the meadows, and the little brook to whose conversation she had listened winter and summer, as a child, are still there. As she looks at them again she recalls the two families—her own and her Uncle Reuben Truman's—and all that happened to them in a halcyon, long-ago time.

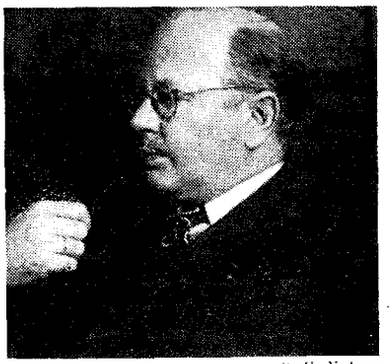
Restharrow was a remote village, its inhabitants chiefly farmworkers, with a few craftsmen and tradesmen. It had its festivals, celebrated with a flourish year after year, its particular superstitions, and for other excitement the inevitable personal dramas, much relished gossip, and the endless cycle of births, marriages, and deaths.

If life in Restharrow lacked color or variety, little Charity Finch did not know it. She was as a child (the adult Miss Finch realized) an observer, rather than a participant. The endless comings and goings between her own home and the Trumans' house, where her widowed Uncle and his three motherless daughters lived, provided her with all the amusement she needed. Moreover, being an onlooker, she was also one of those rarely fortunate beings who notice the details of life, cherishing and storing away in her memory these small delights, such as a country road "patterned all over with webbed foot-prints" after a flock of geese had been driven by.

Miss Finch's affectionate recalling of her childhood is an artful and engagingly casual interweaving of human drama, of charming bits of folklore (no one would "eat one single blackberry after Michaelmas Day, for then the devil dragged his tail over those left on the bushes"), and descriptive details chosen with such discrimination that an entire vignette of cottage, or May festival, or child dancing in a country kitchen, suddenly springs to life. Like some cottage-worked sampler or bit of needlework, vivid with original if informal taste, she fixes for us a golden time which will not come again.

> The world of her childhood had been a narrow world, inhabited by simple people whose lives had been restricted by poverty and other hardships and deprivations; yet it had held something of beauty, of unselfconscious simplicity and downright integrity that seemed to her worthy of remembrance.

"Still Glides the Stream" achieves a bouquet of its own, such as might rise from an apronful of herbs freshly gathered, or from old box trees in the sun. Sensitive in its human portraits, brilliantly alive and often unexpected in its descriptions of countryside and hamlet, and written with a delicacy as distinguished as it is rare, this is a book to savor on leisurely summer days, and cherish thereafter.



—*O. E. Nelson.*

My Current Reading

William L. Shirer, radio commentator and newspaper columnist, is the author of "Berlin Diary" (1941) and last year's sequel, "End of a Berlin Diary."

THE NOTEBOOKS OF HENRY JAMES, *edited by F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth Murdock (Oxford)*

THE JOURNALS OF ANDRÉ GIDE, Vol. I, 1889 - 1913, *translated by Justin O'Brien (Knopf)*

THE JOURNAL OF STENDHAL

THE PORTABLE DANTE, *edited by Paolo Milano (Viking)*

ABINGER HARVEST, *by E. M. Forster (Harcourt, Brace)*

RUSSIA AND THE RUSSIANS, *by Edward Crankshaw (Viking)*

A STUDY OF HISTORY, Vol. III, *by Arnold J. Toynbee (Oxford)*

AN AMERICAN DILEMMA, *by Gunnar Myrdal (Harper)*

AUSGEWAHLTE ERZAEHLUNGEN, *by Thomas Mann*

DRAMATISCHE DICHTUNGEN, *by Johann C. F. von Schiller*

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Redwoman's Success Story

MARIA, THE POTTER OF SAN ILDEFONSO. By Alice Marriott. Norman: University of Oklahoma. 1948. 294 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by ELIZABETH S. SERGEANT

THIS authentic and sensitive story of a Pueblo Indian woman, conspicuous and superior in personality, outstanding in native talent and capacity, is sure to attract many white readers, some of whom will supply further background and biographical and historical detail from their own knowledge. The Pueblo of San Ildefonso, on the Rio Grande, twenty miles or so from Santa Fe, has for many years been a nurseling of lovers and students of Indian arts and crafts. Its gifted citizens are known by name and in person to leading scientists, artists, traders, and also to hoi polloi of world's fairs and tourist buses. Maria, who with her husband Julian developed a new type of black pottery, "black on black" with matte design, shows her caliber in permitting Miss Alice Marriott to be her confidant.

This ethnologist, whose "The Ten Grandmothers," a Kiowa chronicle, was a memorable contribution, never permits the reader to lose sight of the fact that the dignified, immensely strong, and stable matriarchal personality whose story she is telling was rooted deep in her own traditional culture, and had a reserved and cherished private life from which she emerged to meet those who would turn her into a public character. Maria's invention of a type of pottery that could be fitted into any white home without a violation of esthetics, was almost accidental, and her potent share as a catalyst of a new type of economy in her group was part of a deep social change in which the struggle for survival played its part. The population of the village was dying off, the fields and waters were not yielding adequate harvest to subsistence farmers when the handicraft and money economy of the present village came into being.

Miss Marriott has used the free-association method in feeling into Maria's mind, thoughts, and her human history, which was so deeply entwined with this basic change. Should she have told her own story in her own words? Could a Pueblo woman ever speak forth as did the Hopi Sun-Chief, hiding and veiling nothing? In this episodic narrative, almost a novel in form, Maria Martinez rises before us in childhood, courtship, youth, and growing age with a certain dreamy remove. Conversation is generously used, playing about facts and themes that build into a whole. In white terms this is an American success story. The story of a woman who built up a family pottery business on a handicraft base but found a stereotype that sold widely. The story of a trader who, hoping to earn a cook stove, earned a car, a truck, a substantial bank account. The story of a woman concerned to teach and encourage others of her Pueblo sisters in her disciplined craft by her ability and sheer force of character leading a whole village into better living conditions.

But in Indian terms the same story has undercurrents of tragedy and loss. Maria's handsome husband Julian, who in youth sat his horse like a centaur, and in the early days shared and furthered all she did, fashioned the water serpent that coils about her pots, invented new methods of firing, was eventually to be a sacrifice to the devil drink.

The book adds much that is human and subjective to the history of the black pottery discoveries. It is beautifully illustrated with pottery types and designs, though the matte black disappoints one by appearing in a white disguise.

Elizabeth S. Sergeant wrote "Fire Under the Andes: A Group of North American Portraits," "French Perspective," and "Shadow-Shapes."

Lehmann as Elsa, Elizabeth, and Eva

MY MANY LIVES. By Lotte Lehmann. New York: Boosey & Hawkes. 1948. 262 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by ABRAHAM VEINUS

MEMOIR writing and vocal coaching are perhaps the most prevalent types of addiction among singers who have reached their riper years; and, of the two, the former is clearly the less harmful. As memoirs by musicians go, this is a decent and almost modest little book. Although her opera days are well behind her, Lotte Lehmann is still a most capable performer, and her reputation today as a lieder recitalist amply balances her earlier fame in the opera house. Her present position enables her to look back with some nostalgia perhaps, but with no real regret; and she can, in consequence, fortunately avoid that desperate and depressing coyness with which the forgotten prima donna seeks to refurbish her reminiscences of a once distinguished career. There is, of course, the usual quota of anecdotes dealing with the great (Toscanini, Walter, Richard Strauss) whom Lotte Lehmann has, at one time or another, encountered. But the unbecoming tone of breathlessness is pleasantly absent. At least this singer does not seem to have lived her life in order to be able to gossip about it.

For the most part, this book is a review of the various roles which Lotte Lehmann has sung, an analysis of the operatic heroines she has impersonated, and her reasons in detail for presenting them as she did. Since her concern is for dramatic truth in characterization, her discussion of each role carries her into a full recounting of the story. Her presentation of any particular point in the characterization of her heroines evolves out of an analysis of the total situation on stage at that point. This approach seems obvious enough on paper, but it is equally obvious to anyone who attends current operatic productions that the ideal of a singing actress is one to which much lip service is paid. It does not hurt to emphasize that the leading soprano can practise a bit of judicious self-effacement since, as often as not, the action on stage happens to involve, or even revolve around, other characters in the cast. As a matter of fact, there is no harm even in emphasizing the simple point that there is (or should be) in opera such a thing as "action on stage."

The roles that Lotte Lehmann discusses are all familiar ones, although drawn rather heavily from the Wagner-Strauss repertoire. (She admits with refreshing candor that she never had the vocal equipment to sing Mozart.) Elsa in "Lohengrin," Elizabeth in "Tannhaüser," Eva in "Die Meistersinger," Sieglinde in "Die Walküre" and the Marschallin in "Der Rosenkavalier" take up most of her attention, although there are also discussions of the leading female roles in "Manon," "Faust," "Eugen Onegin," and a glimpse at a few of the heroines in Italian opera. Actually the essential content of the book resides in these role analyses. Autobiographical detail is secondary and often perfunctory. One wonders why Lehmann bothered with it at all unless, as seems likely, a singer without anecdotes or reminiscences is the musical vacuum which our publishers abhor.

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Fiction. *For the average reader the two most absorbing novels, among the seven reviewed this week, are A. J. Cronin's "Shannon's Way" and Hollister Noble's "Woman with a Sword." Dr. Cronin's latest exposition of the moral dilemma of worthy people is as emotionally satisfying as ever. In Mr. Noble's Civil War novel the reader meets in moments of crisis the political and military figures of the North, from Lincoln and his Cabinet to Senators and generals. His central figure is an authentic heroine of the war, unveiled to fiction readers for the first time. This book should rise in the best-seller columns like the mercury in a thermometer on a summer day. For novelty we recommend Wright Morris's "The Home Place," a story told in photographs and text, and Oswald Wynd's exciting novel of the Japanese occupation of Singapore, "Red Sun South."*

The Civil War's Mysterious Heroine

WOMAN WITH A SWORD. By Hollister Noble. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1948. 395 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

WITH the exception of the Napoleonic campaigns, no war has been more exhaustively studied by historians, biographers, and novelists than our own Civil War. It has been an irresistible theme for historical fiction, while the lean and majestic figure of Lincoln, illuminating that bloody and fratricidal conflict, has added a new dimension to American biography. To state that another Civil War novel has been published which in the opinion of this reviewer ranks with the best of them, and that it is as moving and absorbing as any he has read, deserves more than casual explanation. Since Margaret Mitchell's "Gone with the Wind," it seemed that no other Southern heroine would be found for a long time as intriguing as Scarlett O'Hara, nor would the effects of that conflict on the fortunes of individuals be more dramatically revealed. Indeed, Stephen Crane's "Red Badge of Courage" and "Gone with the Wind," have represented in their separate ways the two faces of that war: the common soldier drawn into its senseless brutality, and the civilian whose life and fortune are overwhelmed by its catastrophies.

There remained still another approach which Hollister Noble has illustrated so ably in "Woman with a Sword." The motion picture has, as a result of the last world war, discovered the "documentary" film as a powerful means of dramatizing a fictional story. While he was exploring Sandburg's volumes of Lincoln biography, Mr. Noble came across a page that awakened his curiosity and led him to write this documented novel. It is founded on more than two years of research on the life of Anna Ella Carroll, a young woman when the Civil War began, the daughter of the former Governor of Maryland. After prowling through archives and libraries all over the country, Mr. Noble was convinced that this charming woman, who has flitted like a ghost through history, was perhaps worthy of being named America's foremost heroine. He found that she was a political and military genius, a war propagandist of the first order, that she had been used by Lincoln as a spy in the South, and had served him as a secret member of the Cabinet. To confound the reader it need only be added that Anna Carroll, with the aid of a Texas Unionist, had conceived and had drawn up the plan for the Tennessee campaign which was accepted by the President and the War Department, and which, with Grant's massive victories, led directly to the defeat of the South.

When he realized that he had the theme for a stirring novel, a mysterious and actual heroine of the Civil War completely unknown to the general public, and thus a literary bear by the tail, Mr. Noble was faced with a problem difficult for any writer. He had to give life to a novel founded on long historical research, and to reproduce the accents, the features of innumerable historical figures in Washington and in the field of war, from Lincoln and his Cabinet to the humbler folk who played their roles in the great drama. That he has made an enduring and believable historical figure of Miss Carroll and yet has been able to give her all the attributes of a woman, capable of both human love and of an overwhelming passion for a cause, is an accomplishment in itself. He has also added memorable and believable portraits, not only of Lincoln, so often described with bathos and sentimentality in his moments of doubt and desperation, but of Secretary of War Stanton, who is revealed as a man in whose nature courage, anger, and bitterness were curiously mingled. The necessity of thoroughly documenting his heroine and the mainstay of his novel made it compulsory to create all his characters in the same way.

—From "Meet Abraham Lincoln."

The reader may well ask how could this extraordinary and fabulous woman have been buried for so long from popular knowledge. That Abraham Lincoln admired and trusted her, that she was the friend and adviser of some of the greatest men and a few of the greatest scoundrels of the time seems to be obvious. She was not a shrinking violet, but an intelligent, witty, and forceful young lady. She was an incisive and powerful writer whose pamphlets and political essays were known to her contemporaries. Even "My Dear Lady," Marjorie Greenbie's biography of her published eight years ago, did not succeed in raising the veil of obscurity that has enshrouded her.

Probably she is little known today because the America in which she lived was at heart solidly Victorian, and one of its most firmly-held tenets was that women must have no part in the world of business or politics; they belonged in the home with children clustered about their knees. If a conquering Joan of Arc had appeared on the battlefields and at the councils in 1862, armed and on horseback, she would have been put into petticoats and sent home, and every man would have denied that he had ever seen her. Thus Judge Bates of St. Louis, in the first chapter, asks Senator Wade of Ohio, who had discovered Miss Carroll's gifts, "How can any young female achieve weight in political matters? It sounds preposterous." It will not seem preposterous to the reader, since Mr. Noble is able to establish her bona-fides after a few dozen pages, by the clever device of having the young Texan judge, who is later to fall in love with her, and who

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has been set to spy upon her activities in Washington, completely convinced not only of her ability but of her devotion to the Northern cause.

Readers of "Woman with a Sword" are certain to find themselves absorbed in the story of Anna Carroll and the question of why she has been so long shrouded from a country that has been crying out for a heroine of her stature. They will find the novel tense with a drama of perilous days when the whole cause of the North appeared to be crumbling to dust and defeats; they will also rediscover, vital and alive, the great figures at the heart of the conflict, revealed as human beings who were aware of the frightening significance of their words and acts. But they will not find some of the more foolish and popular conventions of the contemporary historical novel. The lay figures, the costumed wax-works and period settings, the heroine whose morals have slackened with the blossoming of her redundant figure, the amorous hero, the scenes of blood and sadism, all are missing. This is an honest as well as an absorbing book, and an honest and fascinating woman is its protagonist.

Return to Boyhood with Lens and Pen

THE HOME PLACE. By Wright Morris. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1948. 176 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by COURTLANDT CANBY

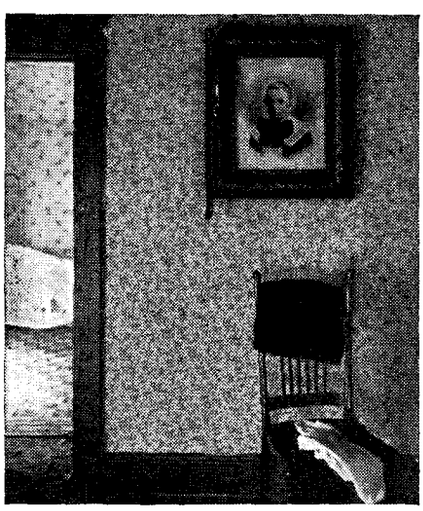
I REMEMBER a few years ago looking into a copy of Wright Morris's "The Inhabitants" because I was both puzzled and intrigued by it. The photographs were striking in their flat perfection of composition and feeling for detail, and these caught my eye first. Then I started reading the text. It was a loose pattern of conversation pieces, character sketches, autobiographies, even bits of free verse, and words that didn't fit the photographs. But I noticed that in the photographs there was the same feeling for interplay of texture and significance as there was for the interplay of sound and meaning in the words. Here, I felt, was an imperfect but striking experiment in the congruence of two arts.

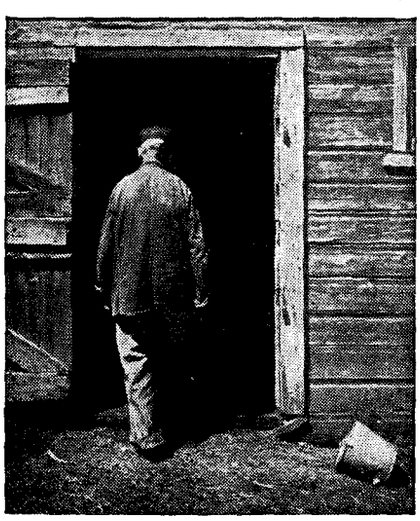
"The Home Place" marks a considerable advance in Wright Morris's mastery of this unusual technique. There is a much closer integration of text and pictures than there was in the earlier book. In the text there is an apparently deliberate attempt throughout to avoid histrionics, overwriting, over-preciosity.

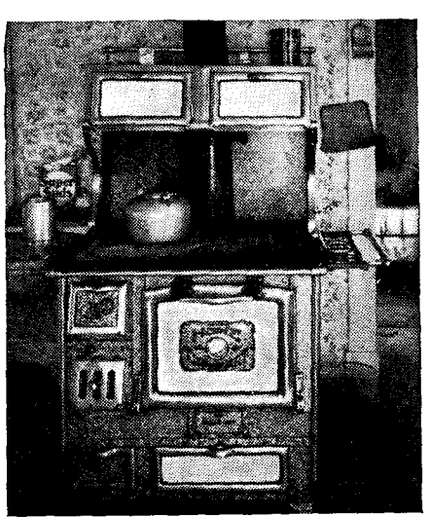
This casual word-picture of a man's return to his boyhood in Nebraska after too many years in New York City has little plot. Bringing with him a wife intent only upon finding a home, and two city-bred kids whose unfamiliarity with farm life lightens an otherwise drab tale, the author—for obviously it is only a thinly disguised Wright Morris who is speaking—uses the return as a subtle device to illuminate the people and the surroundings of the home place in Lone Tree, Nebraska. Morris writes like a photographer, building up a leisurely but sharply focussed word-picture of the folks on the home place and the houses and chairs, and clothes, and the jokes, the speech, the faces, the attitudes of the inhabitants of that part of Nebraska where he was born. And you see these same things in the photographs.

The book is hardly a novel of the soil. Morris's camera eye sees too unsparingly to allow room for back-to-the-soil sentimentality. What does emerge when you have finished the book is something a good deal more honest: a convincing impression of the native's return, of his awkwardness, of his self-consciousness in a place that was his but is no longer; yet also of the deep hold of a man's childhood and the unsentimental love of a home place no matter how drab it may be. "Home is where you hang your childhood," he puts it.

It is the blending of pictures and text, however, that lends distinction to "The Home Place." Unlike "The Inhabitants," a few of the photographs tie in directly with the text, but that's not the important thing about them. It's the "character" of what he photographs that interests Morris. A vacant house, for instance: "I suppose it has something to do with the fact that any house that's been lived in, any room that's been slept in, is not vacant any more. From that point on it's forever occupied." His houses have palpably been occupied; the old coats hanging on a wall have been worn by the old man; the swing seat is smooth with the rubbing of generations of children. The emotional connotations of photographs and text are one. I imagine this in the end is what Wright Morris hoped to achieve. He has succeeded.







—From "The Home Place."

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Love Between Medics, and the CIC

SHANNON'S WAY. By A. J. Cronin. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1948. 313 *pp.* $3.

DIVIDED. By Ralph Freedman. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1948. 447 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by EDWIN SEAVER

DR. Cronin is no George Eliot in largeness either of conception or execution — that doughty Victorian would consider a story like "Shannon's Way" merely an episode in her narrative sweep — but he certainly knows how to tell a story and sustain our interest in it. It is altogether right that he should be popular. You can divide his novel into so many daily comic strip or soap opera episodes, and always our interest remains at fever pitch. Will Doc Shannon be able to make a go of it despite all adversities? Will he finally get together with Miss Jean Law, despite their difference in background and religion, and marry her? The answer, dear reader, is—don't fail to read—or listen to—tomorrow's instalment.

This is not to say that the whole thing is not earnestly and honestly contrived. Dr. Cronin has not only a flair for storytelling. He is altogether serious about giving us the flavor and color—or rather the lack of both—in the lower middle class environment he writes of, occasionally to a quite Dickensian degree. If it is a little hard to believe that in our day — or somewhat earlier day — so many emotional and devotional scruples could stand in the path of true love—but my dear, surely not after "Ann Veronica"!—it must be admitted that he knows how to depict petty ambition without implying villainy, self-righteousness without imputing hypocrisy, genuine rectitude without charging it to naivete or stupidity.

In "Shannon's Way," Dr. Cronin tells how young Robert Shannon fell in love with medical student Jean Law not at first sight, but at second or third, how he had to struggle against poverty, the lure of becoming a secure practitioner, the lush job in a sanatorium, to go on with his researches, only in the end to find somebody else had got ahead of him; how he had to win Jean only to lose her and lose her only to win her again despite the adverse tides of family and religion, until finally the twain were united again—life and wife, dream and reality, research and marriage—and nothing thereafter can possibly them part—all this is told with quite admirable simplicity and narrative confidence.

—*Artistic Portraits.*

Ralph Freedman's "muse is divided between truth and Hollywood" . . .

—*Dorothy Wilding.*

. . . A. J. Cronin's "into so many daily comic strip or soap opera episodes."

Dr. Cronin remains the pale but legitimate inheritor of the Victorian storytellers, and his honest hero and heroine genuine if somewhat quaint—and rather late—children of Victorian times. If his story line and characterization go back to the horse-and-buggy days, it must be admitted that old Dobbin and the one-horse shay still get there in their own good time.

* * *

"DIVIDED" is a first novel by a young German who came to the United States in 1940, served with the American Army in Tunisia and Italy and, at the conclusion of the war, remained in Europe for some months to do counter-intelligence work in Austria. It has the distinction of being the winner of the second Lewis and Clark Northwest Award.

The setting of "Divided" is the town of Kleinbach, Austria, in that long ago spring of 1945 following the end of World War II. Kleinbach, when the novel opens, is occupied by American troops, but the Americans are soon to be relieved by the Russians, under the terms of the Potsdam agreement. Meanwhile it is the task of the CIC (Counter-Intelligence Corps Detachment) to ferret out former Nazis, chief among whom is the legendary Rudiger, who is thought to be hiding in the mountains overlooking the town. Rudiger, apparently, was a dreaded SS leader, although no one—least of all the CIC—seems to know just what he looks like or even precisely what he did when he was riding high. But then Mr. Freedman has the weakness of being rather vague about all his leading characters, with the consequence that they remain with us more as types than as individuals.

There is, for instance, Helmut Horn, who escaped from a Nazi concentration camp the night before the American victory, is non-Jewish and vaguely Left, and soon wins the admiration of everybody in his role of interpreter. But throughout, Helmut's background and character remain as vague as his politics. The same thing is true of Rosen, a member of the CIC who had left Germany before the outbreak of the war, had served in Spain as a correspondent, and who, though Jewish and ardently anti-Nazi, had a love affair with the Nazi wife of the most important Kleinbach Party member. It must have come as much as a surprise to her as to the reader that she could give herself so readily to one who is twice hated as a Jew and an American, then walk out to be shot by the Nazis, simply because she can only go so far in understanding the mysterious workings of democracy.

Then there is Frank Hanson, vaguely reminiscent of Major Joppolo in "A Bell for Adano" and Major Christopher in "Straw to Make Brick," the innately good, sensitive soul who fights always for the good, the true, and the beautiful, which he seems to recognize instinctively; Captain Wilson in charge of Military Government, the typically naive American (in the lexicon of our popular novels and movies) so easily outmaneuvered by the wily European. Even Baron von Wohl, big Austrian landholder, Christian patriot, and gentleman, afraid of the Nazis and bewildered by American ingenuousness, is cut according to type—fictional type.

Mr. Freedman, in "Divided," must be credited with good intentions, but it is to be feared that he has read too many American novels or seen too

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many American movies. It is his muse which is divided, between truth and Hollywood. His novel is reminiscent of certain of the slicker American films; it all seems so plausible and even serious while we are in the theatre, but afterwards, when we stop to think about it, it all seems to add up to so very little.

Edwin Seaver is advertising manager of the Book Find Club, editor of the annual "Cross Section," and author of the novel "The Company."

Frozen Emotions

POSTSCRIPT TO WENDY. By Amram Scheinfeld. New York: Whittlesey House. 1948. 303 *pp.* $3

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

IT must have occurred to many a practising psychologist, or to such writers in the field as Mr. Scheinfeld (author of "Women and Men" and "You and Heredity") who are intimately involved in the study of human relationships, that this case or that case would make a wonderful theme for a novel. They are undoubtedly correct; and if more of them have not rushed therefore to the production of novels it must be because they have realized how different a novel would have to be from a case history. I do not think Mr. Scheinfeld has thought sufficiently about this. He has made several obvious concessions to what he believes are the necessities of fiction, but he hasn't done enough work to get the smell of the clinical notebook out of his novel.

There are really two cases involved: first, a man who is nursing his love for a dead woman and is thereby prevented from loving anywhere else, and, second, a woman who is frigid to men out of a terrific sense of insecurity—she doesn't know who she is, even of what race, and feels in consequence no earth beneath her feet. Certainly there is more than enough of drama here for the making of a novel; why, then, has not Mr. Scheinfeld gotten a dramatic novel out of it? It must be because he has not created his characters. Instead he has written down what he knows about them, which is something else again. Jerry Lorris, he says, is a newspaperman. He has loved Wendy, he has lost her, he is now wandering as one lost among men and women, in search of the unattainable. Here is his own story written in the first person, a long letter to Wendy about his thoughts and dreams, the girls he knows, the passes at love he has made, the advertising men and

(*Continued on page* 27)

Belles-Lettres. *One may ridicule a return to nature and the primitive in literature, but the instinct is sound. Fortunate in a manner are those literatures like the Irish (see Robin Flower's "The Irish Tradition," below) which have never strayed far from the intuitive and the mythological. For, as Heinrich Zimmer sets forth in "The King and the Corpse," reviewed here, the great folk tales and myths of all nations spring, fully clothed in symbolism, from the deep and timeless tribulations of mankind. They are purgative and restorative, holding up to us a cloudy mirror in which we see the likeness of our ancient troubles. The last years have seen a healthy interest in American folklore, exemplified by such recent books as Botkin's "A Treasury of New England Folklore," and even the mythological symbolism of Lockridge's epic "Raintree County."*

Carried on the Lips of Kerry

THE IRISH TRADITION. By Robin Flower. New York: Oxford University Press. 1948. 173 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by PADRAIC COLUM

IT IS odd, I know, to use the word charming for a work of scholarship, but Dr. Flower's "The Irish Tradition," because it is written with an eagerness that scholars seldom keep and with a delight in his subject, is a charming book. Here is a characteristic passage. The scholar is on a road in Kerry when a man digging potatoes in a nearby field calls him over to talk to him:

> Without further preamble or explanation he fell to reciting Ossianic lays. For half an hour I sat there while his firm voice went on. After a while he changed from poetry to prose. . . . I listened spellbound and, as I listened, it came to me suddenly that here on the last inhabited piece of European land, looking out on the Atlantic horizon, I was hearing the oldest living tradition in the British Isles. So far as the record goes this matter in one form or another is older than the Anglo-Saxon Beowulf, and yet it lives still on the lips of the peasantry, a real and vivid experience, while except for a few painful scholars, Beowulf has long passed out of memory.

A master of texts, Robin Flower was enthralled by the tradition whose continuation lived on the lips of men and women in Kerry or the Blasket Islands. And so he makes a tradition that extends from the seventh to the seventeenth century not an impersonal thing but something that enriched personalities and was enriched by them.

But with all his interest in living tradition he was able to make his scholarship illuminating. Because there are no marks by which one can note its movement, the history of Gaelic Ireland whether social or literary seems stationary. Robin Flower's book sets up marks. We think of the early nature poetry as something that just happened. But it came out of a definite movement:

> The eighth and ninth centuries are the periods in which the Irish literature as we know it today took shape. . . . It is more to our purpose to note that new forms of verse were developed in this time under the Latin influence of the monasteries. . . . A religious reform was in progress, the essence of which was the intensification of that ascetic spirit which had always marked Irish Christianity. . . . It is thus that I would explain the emergence of personal poetry in Ireland in the period of religious reform. And under the head of personal poetry I would wish to include that form of composition rather unhappily named "nature poetry." For such poetry does not come out of nature, but from the mind of man conditioning natural things by a particular attitude in their presence.

Another mark Robin Flower set up is the rise of the bardic order. We are apt to think of bards in Ireland as ancient historically and personally. But the poets of the middle ages have not the function that the earlier poets, the *Fili,* had. The bardic order arose out of the laicization of the learning that the monasteries had preserved and developed. The bards lived and worked under the protection of certain noble families; their order, Robin Flower shows, was instituted by one who, like Alfred in England, was a typical culture-king, Brian Boroma. "From 1200 the literary families are firmly in the saddle, and in describing that unique phenomenon, the bardic order, one is at liberty to select material from five centuries, for their constitution and outlook remained substantially the same throughout the Middle Ages." To most of us a bard is a man with a flowing beard bearing

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a harp à la Ossian. But we get a different image from Robin Flower:

> They correspond in a way to the university men, but their fixed place in society was higher than any that his attainments alone have ever been able to secure for the university man in England. They were indeed, until the fall of the old Irish order an intellectual aristocracy, with all the privileges and, no doubt, many of the prejudices of a caste.

Another mark that Robin Flower sets up is the rise of a poetry derived ultimately from Provence. It was first practised in Ireland by the Norman-descended aristocrats who used both French and Irish and by the Gaelic aristocrats of whom the princely Manus O'Donnell is representative. This poetry is comparable to the poetry that was written about the same time by Surrey and Wyatt in England, the English poetry stemming from Italian while the Irish poetry stemmed from French. The bards took over the themes from the aristocrats:

> This poetry is the offspring of the marriage of those two orders. In this happy union the aristocrats of position contributed the subject and the aristocrats of art the style.

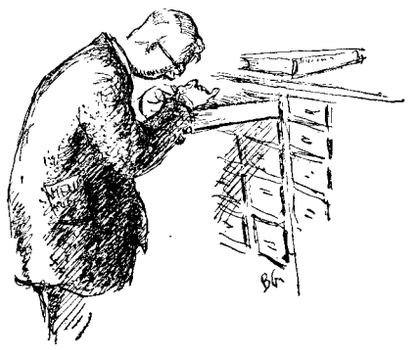
Robin Flower made his own of this particular period. Out of his studies in it came the arresting poems he translated as "Love's Bitter Sweet." Some are given in these pages with many others from earlier centuries, and these excellent translations of beautiful, quaint, and always distinctive poems add to the charm of "The Irish Tradition." Robin Flower was (alas, that one has to say "was") Keeper of the Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum. He was an Englishman whose enthusiasm for the Irish tradition led him to live with his family every year among the last custodians of that tradition, the farmers and fishermen of the Blasket Islands. There is no history of Ireland, properly speaking. But with "The Irish Tradition" and Dr. Dillon's recently published "Early Irish Literature," the common reader can get a good idea of what the spirit was that conditioned Irish history.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 747)

M. VAN DOREN:
BURDEN OF ORNAMENT

My darling with a single daisy,
Porcelain, pinned in her hair,
On other afternoons will glitter
With earrings, silver, or a fair
Gold brooch, that supper changes
Into an apron, crimson, there.
.....
My darling bears the ancient burden
Smiling .....

Indologian Holiday



THE KING AND THE CORPSE. By Heinrich Zimmer. New York: Pantheon Books, Inc. 1948. 316 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by SIEGFRIED KRACAUER

THIS handsome volume of essays by the late Heinrich Zimmer, a publication of the Bollingen Series, is the yield of what can be called an Indologian's holiday. Zimmer was not only a scholar versed in Sanskrit texts, but a profoundly agitated mind living in the present as well as in the past. So he wandered to and fro between the ages, trying to decode the symbolic language of old myths in terms of contemporary experience. Here is the result of his wanderings. Expertly edited by Joseph Campbell, these essays rest upon Zimmer's belief—a belief which he shares with Jung and others—that the spiritual heritage of archaic man still survives in "the deeper unconscious layers of our soul." His meditations are a compound of psychology and mythology. They are ingratiating because they are not meant to be more than the musings of a learned dilettante.

Zimmer ambles between Orient and Occident, antiquity and the Middle Ages, leisurely recounting each story he picks up en route. The first, drawn from the Arabian Nights, is the well-known tale of the niggardly Abu Kasem and his patched-up slippers which make him the laughing-stock of the town. When he eventually attempts to dispose of them, they persistently return to their owner, causing his ruin. The miser who did not wish to part with them now is punished by their disastrous presence. The slippers, as Zimmer sees it, are an externalization of Karma—the ever-growing sum of man's actions and omissions, failures and achievements.

In this way Zimmer expounds an Irish fairy tale, a medieval German legend, four sagas from the cycle of King Arthur, the Sanskrit story of the King and the Corpse, and several Indian myths which, incidentally, have never before been translated into a European language. The stories are so arranged that they compose a sort of psychological epic. Having demonstrated the impact of Karma through Abu Kasem's slippers, Zimmer shows how we should deal with the demoniac forces that threaten to overpower us. It is the eternal conflict between the unconscious and the conscious, evil instincts and good intentions, anarchical nature and spiritual purity. In the light of Zimmer's exegesis both the Irish Conn-eda story and the German legend of John Golden-Mouth teach the reconciliation of these opposites. Conn-eda, the naive hero, must learn to be ruthless; and the bishop Golden-Mouth cannot achieve saintliness unless he lives the life of a beast.

Evil, then, demands to be accepted, for only by wrestling with it can we mature to wholeness. This is the moral of the sagas of Gawain and Owain, who trustingly follow their elemental drives and thus succeed in establishing an inner balance which benefits their highest aspirations. They become "knowers," able to see eye to eye with death; they lose their original innocence to regain it on the level of consciousness. Zimmer's psychological epic culminates in the famous Sanskrit story after which the book is named. Resuming the Karma theme, this story mirrors the relationship between an individual's conscious life and his unconscious past. The gist of it, according to Zimmer, is the feat of self-integration accomplished by the king of the story: he does not let bygones be bygones, but in a torturing scrutiny resurrects what he has left behind, exorcising *and* incorporating it.

It is true that Zimmer identifies mythical events as psychological processes, but he never follows the current practice of featuring such processes at the expense of their meanings. Many psychologists do precisely this. They are so engaged in tracing outer occurrences to inner mechanisms that they all but forget to examine the significance of what we displace, rationalize, or project. Zimmer, on the contrary, is entirely unconcerned with these mechanisms and their interplay. His objective is not so much psychology for its own sake as the psyche—inner life conceived of as a meaningful whole. To him the "soul" is the arena of forces that antagonize or attract each other in the interest of unquestionable human values. And he would not even think of isolating psychological drives to which no such values can be attached.

Zimmer seems to have been deeply disturbed by modern positivism and the blindness to values and meanings in its wake. This follows from certain passages of his book in which he elegiacally points to our remoteness from

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the wisdom inherent in ancient myths and tales. Science, he says, has learned to master the material forces of nature, but it has lost control "over the forces of the soul." Our psyche is undirected; we are strangely unable to determine its content and scope. Similarly, he complains of the "overresolute morality" we display in handling individual and social problems. Such rationally streamlined behavior increasingly prevents us from communing with our instincts—those fairy horses and miraculous lions that guide the hero more safely through the danger zones of life than would all his conscious reasoning. And finally, in keeping with this trust in the animal part of our existence, Zimmer condemns any excesses of planning. He does not expressly say so. Yet his emphasis on the Indian notion of the world as a product of ever-repeated spontaneous acts clearly implies his belief in the superior blessings of continual improvisation.

Amiable as the book is, it lacks strength and precision. Zimmer is right in calling himself a dilettante. His exuberant language, visibly influenced by oriental narratives, reminds one less of these than of layers of tropical vegetation. There is a certain confusion in him which contaminates his psychological concepts and makes him undiscriminatingly endorse both genuine myths and Wagner's counterfeits. And his undialectical reveling in the old teachings reveals him to be an incorrigible romantic. But whatever its weaknesses, Zimmer's book will captivate those who, like himself, are homesick for meanings.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 266

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 266 will be found in the next issue.

NMBQCPQ BDNETQCB GHKQ;

TEQBQCPQ BFEQCXFDQCB WF.

FDHONB LRGGQE—

XCHOHGHXWN

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 265

God invented the talking machine. I only invented the first one that can be shut off.

THOMAS EDISON.

Baseball. *If a poll were taken among New York sportswriters today, it seems a cinch that first choice for the most unpopular manager of a big-league baseball club would be Leo Durocher—and a not inconsiderable portion of that unpopularity might be traced to "The Dodgers and Me," reviewed below. The sportswriters claim that Durocher, in addition to his brashness, impetuosity, aggressiveness (he once socked a spectator after a game under circumstances highly advantageous to Durocher, to say the least), will steal a base on the truth every time he can. Meanwhile, the 1947 pennant-winning Dodgers (under Burt Shotton) are playing slow, uninspired, heads-down, bush-league ball under Durocher. Anyone wanna take any bets about Durocher being back next year?*

Diamonds from Brooklyn to Boston

OF the dozen and more baseball books published this season, the one that has aroused the most controversy, as befits its author, is Leo Durocher's recital of his life with the Brooklyn Dodgers. In "The Dodgers and Me" (Ziff-Davis, $2.50), Leo—or Mr. Harold Parrott of the Brooklyn front-office staff who is the ghost presumptive—has managed to project his catalytic personality into print with little or no modulation. In these days when every athlete who has his autobiography written for him insists on loving everyone in sight, it is definitely refreshing to come across an avowed anti-mugwump like Durocher. The players and magnates who don't measure up to his standard, he berates sharply. The ones he approves of he embraces with equal ardor. Since Leo knows which side his check is endorsed on, the man who draws the best press from him is Branch Rickey, or just plain B. R., as Leo refers to him. Leo, by the way, is addressed by his players as "Skipper." They worship him.

The trouble with Leo's arguing of the case for Durocher is that he sets out to give himself an absolutely clean slate, a quite impossible assignment. In his efforts to re-mark his own report card, he has not been above, or below, twisting some of the facts so that they fit neatly into the portrait of himself of which the 1948 or slightly-abridged Durocher approves. His version of the famous clubhouse mutiny of 1944, according to most sportswriters, is one of the finest pieces of imaginative prose that has come along in years. Leo is also a skilled hand at omission, and not bad at all at ungallantry. His must qualify his praise for Burt Shotton, who led the Dodgers to a pennant during Leo's year of exile, with the reminder that Burt had Jackie Robinson (and Leo didn't), and there were quite a few close games that Burt let slip away which, Durocher implies, Durocher's acumen and vigor would have pulled out of the fire.

Rickey, that plexus of anomalies—or, to hark closer to Bedford Avenue, "that man of many faucets, all of them running"—is also the co-hero of Jackie Robinson's autobiography "My Own Story," by Jackie Robinson (Greenberg, paper $1, cloth $2). Whether or not Rickey's liberalism contains a certain commercial yeast, it is to his eternal credit that he ripped through the Jim Crowism of our national game by giving a fine Negro athlete a chance to play in organized baseball and by directing with dogged astuteness Robinson's climb to the big leagues. Now that Robinson has established himself as a star and another Negro, Larry Doby, is doing well with Cleveland, it is easy to forget just how revolutionary the Robinson experiment was and how tremendous was the pressure on a young man, an intelligent young man acutely aware that his race as well as himself was involved in his every move.

With the able assistance of Wendell Smith of the *Pittsburgh Courier,* Robinson narrates calmly, factually, and with his characteristic discretion the progress of the experiment—the bitter days in Florida when some towns refused to allow the Brooklyn squad to use their fields because of Robinson's presence, the nights when he worried about his inability to give a good account of himself because of the unrelenting pressure and brooded about chucking the whole idea, his first friendships with his team-mates and his undisguised joy in making good in Montreal, his promotion to the Brooklyn team where he developed into a key factor on a pennant-winner. Robinson goes out of his way to tell

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about the times he did not deliver in the pinch; and of the many excellent photos, a percentage shows Jackie in unheroic poses, like caught in a rundown. It is an exceptionally modest book.

Brooklyn is also represented in the "histories" published this season. "The Dodgers" (Hastings House, $2.75) is a pictorial account by John Durant of the distinctive brand of ball that has flourished in that borough from the 1860's on, regardless of whether the team was billed as the Excelsiors, the Atlantics, the Dodgers (from Trolley-Dodgers), the Superbas, the Robins, the Daffiness Boys, the Kings, or da Bums. This glorious tradition may have reached its peak with Babe Herman's safaris on the basepaths but it is certainly not extinct. In his preoccupation with color, Durant perhaps has included too many photos of embattled fandom, but for the most part his proportions are agreeable, his pictures evocative, and his text nicely direct.

The three other histories of ball teams—Harold Kaese's "The Boston Braves," Lee Allen's "The Cincinnati Reds," and Frederick G. Lieb's "The Pittsburgh Pirates" (all of them $3 and published by Putnam)—follow quite closely the successful formula established by Mr. Lieb and Frank Graham in their pioneer biographies of individual major-league clubs. The Pirates, Reds, and Braves are researched from their beginnings, then studied season by season in general summary fashion. The most important games are described in detail, the stars are vignetted, statistics unraveled, the trades and other efforts to produce a winner are discussed — breezily and easily, like one continuous sports page, with an abundance of good anecdote and good spirit. The high points come when a team is moulded into a contender for the pennant and eventually carries it off. In the case of the Braves, this last occurred in 1914, and there have been "winninger" teams than the Reds and the Pirates, but the three authors manage to keep the interest percolating even when they are stuck with dull ball clubs. These books, to be sure, are tailored for the fans in the area where the respective teams are located, but anyone who has followed baseball closely will like them and like them a lot. There's something inexplicably pleasurable in running across long-forgotten names (like Eppa Rixey, Johnny Gooch, Emil Yde, Socks Seibold) and curious old statistics like Hal Lee's grounding into twenty-three double-plays in one year. Of the anecdotes, one of the best is the one Kaese tells about Max West, a Brave who was never an intellectual threat. With a teammate on third, West was trotting back to the dugout after being retired at first. As Max was crossing behind the catcher, the pitcher let go with a wild pitch. The man on third would have scored easily had Max not scooped up the ball and tossed it to the catcher who tagged out Max's team-mate at the plate.

Three books on Babe Ruth are included in this season's batch, and they should put an end to the fables that the Babe was an orphan named Gerhardt and other unfounded stories on his early years. Martin Weldon's "Babe Ruth" (Crowell, $2.50) adheres to a conservative year-by-year approach. The excessive language of sports jargon weighs it down occasionally, but it is a sound, workmanlike job and would probably seem even more so if it did not have to compete with two other books on Ruth with greater "inside" flavor. "The Babe Ruth Story" (Dutton, $3), "my only authorized story," as the Babe has tagged it, is the result of a collaboration between Ruth and Bob Considine that comes off rather happily. The big moments in the Bambino's career, such as his "called shot" against the Cubs, are treated dramatically with good effect. The "authorized" Ruth emerges as a good-natured fellow who never meant wrong, really, even when he was bullying Miller Huggins, the little Yankee manager. Since the Babe is still accountable to the kids of America, it is probably best in the long run that he is a bit lenient in judging himself. "The big fellow . . . was never anything but a kid himself," is the estimate Tom Meany arrives at in his "Babe Ruth" (Barnes, $2.75). Knowledgeable and witty, Meany's study is a series of essays—"The Big Tummy Ache," "The Big Hello," "The Beau Geste," and so on—in which he rambles around as confidently as a man in his own backyard. One of Meany's interesting stresses is that the record of which Ruth was the proudest was pitching twenty-nine consecutive scoreless innings in the 1916 and 1918 World Series.

Rounding up the odd books: Roger L. Treat's "Walter Johnson, King of the Pitchers" (Messner, $3.75) is unworthy of its subject. Treat has attempted a novelistic treatment of Johnson's career and character. He has come up with a soap-opera in which seasoned big-leaguers talk like batboys. . . . "Baseball for Everyone," by Joe DiMaggio (Whittlesey House, $2.50), is primarily an instructional book, entertainingly put together with big-league allusiveness. It is recommended for boys who are not being brought up on Bert Dunne's "Play Ball!," the best of all the instruction books, and interestingly enough, recommended for women who want to learn the subtleties of the game that their husbands find so difficult to explain. . . . The sleeper of the year is "Tall Baseball Stories" (Association Press), the work of Julius "Jiggs" Amarant. If ever a book started out with two strikes on it, it is this one which blandly announces that it will recount the historic battles between the Lightfoot Lilies and the Ringtail Roarers, as told by Wee Willie Little, the 300-pound mascot of the Lilies. In my case, my prejudices were quickly routed by the Cincinnati-German and Kentucky-hillbilly humor and the solid baseball sense on which Amarant builds his studies in exaggeration.

HERBERT WARREN WIND.

"I wonder if anything comes of all this?"

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Free Advice to Election-Year Orators

THE orator, first of all, must have power of statement,—must have the fact, and know how to tell it. In any public assembly, the speaker who has the facts and can and will state them, will have his audience, though he is otherwise ignorant, though he is hoarse and ungraceful, though he stutters and screams.

In every company the man with the fact is like the guide you hire to lead your party up a mountain, or through a difficult country. He may not compare with any of the party in mind, or breeding, or courage, or possessions, but he is much more important to the present need than any of them. That is what we go to the court-house for,—the statement of the fact, and of a general fact, the real relation of all the parties; and it is the certainty with which, indifferently in any affair that is well handled, the truth stares us in the face through all the disguises that are put upon it,—a piece of the well-known human life,—that makes the interest of a courtroom to the intelligent spectator.

Next to the knowledge of the fact and its law is method, which constitutes the genius and efficiency of all remarkable men. A crowd of men are all pretty well acquainted with the object of the meeting; they have all read the facts in the same newspapers. The orator possesses no information which his hearers have not, yet he teaches them to see the thing with his eyes. By the new placing, the circumstances acquire new solidity and worth. Every fact gains consequence by his naming it, and trifles become important. His expressions fix themselves in men's memories, and fly from mouth to mouth. His mind has some new principle of order. Where he looks, all things fly into their places.

Imagery. The orator must be, to a certain extent, a poet. We are such imaginative creatures that nothing so works on the human mind, barbarous or civil, as a trope. Condense some daily experience into a glowing symbol, and an audience is electrified. They feel as if they already possessed some new right and power over a fact which they can detach, and so completely master in thought. It is a wonderful aid to the memory, which carries away the image and never loses it.

Statement, method, imagery, selection, tenacity of memory, power of dealing with facts, of illuminating them, of sinking them by ridicule or by diversion of the mind, rapid generalization, humor, pathos, are keys which the orator holds; and yet these fine gifts are not eloquence, and do often hinder a man's attainment of it. And if we come to the heart of the mystery, perhaps we should say that the truly eloquent man is a sane man with power to communicate his sanity. If you arm the man with the extraordinary weapons of this art, give him a grasp of facts, learning, quick fancy, sarcasm, splendid allusion, interminable illustration,—all these talents, so potent and charming, have an equal power to ensnare and mislead the audience and the orator. His talents are too much for him, his horses run away with him; and people always perceive whether you drive or whether the horses take the bits in their teeth and run.

There is for every man a statement possible of that truth which he is most unwilling to receive,—a statement possible, so broad and so pungent that he cannot get away from it, but must either bend to it or die of it. In cases where profound conviction has been wrought, the eloquent man is he who is no beautiful speaker, but who is inwardly drunk with a certain belief. It agitates and tears him, and perhaps almost bereaves him of the power of articulation. Then it rushes from him as in short, abrupt screams, in torrents of meaning. The possession the subject has of his mind is so entire that it insures an order of expression which is the order of Nature itself, and so the order of greatest force, and inimitable by any art.

ELOQUENCE must be grounded on the plainest narrative. Afterwards, it may warm itself until it exhales symbols of every kind and color, speaks only through the most poetic forms; but, first and last, it must still be at bottom a Biblical statement of fact. The orator is thereby an orator, that he keeps his feet ever on a fact. Thus only is he invincible. No gifts, no graces, no power of wit or learning or illustration will make any amends for want of this. All audiences are just to this point. Fame of voice or of rhetoric will carry people a few times to hear a speaker; but they soon begin to ask, "What is he driving at?," and if this man does not stand for anything, he will be deserted.

He who will train himself to mastery in this science of persuasion must see that his speech is not separated from action; that when he has spoken he has not done nothing, nor done wrong, but has cleared his own skirts, has engaged himself to wholesome exertion. Let him look on opposition as opportunity. He cannot be defeated or put down. There is a principle of resurrection in him, an immortality of purpose. Men are averse and hostile, to give value to their suffrages. It is not the people that are in fault for not being convinced, but he that cannot convince them.

Eloquence, like every other art, rests on laws the most exact and determinate. It is the best speech of the best soul. It may well stand as the exponent of all that is grand and immortal in the mind. If it do not so become an instrument, but aspires to be somewhat of itself, and to glitter for show, it is false and weak. In its right exercise, it is an elastic, unexhausted power expanding with the expansion of our interests and affections. Its great masters were grave men, who preferred their integrity to their talent, and esteemed that object for which they toiled, whether the prosperity of their country, or the laws, or a reformation, or liberty of speech or of the press, or letters, or morals, as above the whole world, and themselves also.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Summer

By Margaret Bartlett

NOW that the mere leaves of a day have blotted out the everlasting hills
and the buzz of momentary insects fills
all stillness with its summer,
I say
Yes, try again and forever forgiven.
Try again and again for as long as you
have breath, until your attempt has become
the eternal season
that is the flower of your death.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cain Before Comics

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Of the numerous replies we have received to Dr. Fredric Wertham's article, "The Comics . . . Very Funny!"* [SRL *May* 29] *and John Mason Brown's "The Case against the Comics"* [SRL *March* 20], *one of the most interesting is that written by fourteen-year-old David Pace Wigransky of Washington, D. C. Young Mr. Wigransky, who has just completed the tenth grade at the Calvin Coolidge Senior High School, is a devoted reader and collector of comic books. He tells us that he now owns 5,212 such books and "intends to make drawing for them his profession and life's work."*

"Unlike other critics of comics," Mr. Wigransky writes, "I possess a first-hand knowledge of them, and unlike even those critics who argue in their favor, I can say that I was once an average, normal comic-book fan and reader, during the war and before it. Therefore I feel that I am more qualified than people like John Mason Brown and Dr. Wertham in criticizing them."

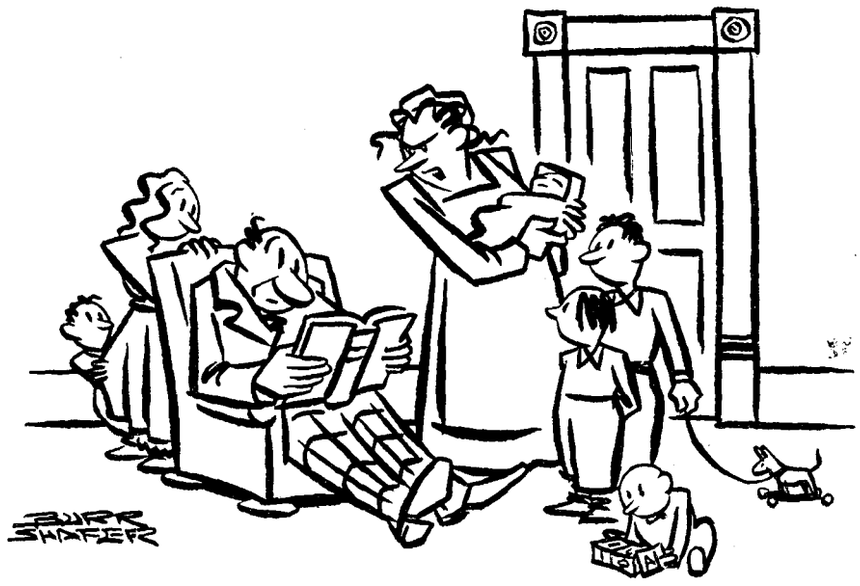
Although sections of Mr. Wigransky's letter have been omitted for considerations of space, his copy has not been edited.

SIR: *And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*

The brothers Cain and Abel lived in a world of ideal tranquility, a world that had never before known violence or crime, a world completely devoid of comic books. How then does Dr. Fredric Wertham account for this brutal fratricide told within the pages of the Bible, the only book in the history of man more widely read and more widely attacked than American comic books?

Or, if Cain's slaying of Abel seems far-off and far-fetched, let us take the Leopold-Loeb case, which took place in early 1924, just five years before publication of the first independently produced comic book. Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb, eighteen and seventeen years old respectively, were accused of brutally murdering fourteen-year-old Robert Franks, thereby committing what has been acknowledged by some as the most brutal crime in United States history. Both boys were of well-to-do and cultured families and were readers of "good" books. How then could Dr. Wertham possibly account for even the remotest thought of murder or violence entering the minds of either?

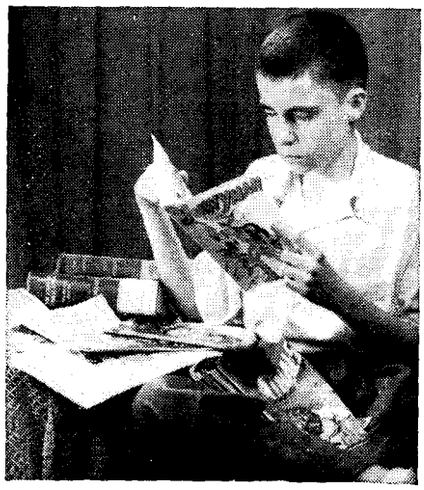
Dr. Wertham cites some two dozen gruesome and horrible cases of juvenile delinquency from his files. These crimes were committed recently by weak-minded children and adolescents, who, Dr. Wertham implies, would never have considered crime had not they been comic-book readers. In none of these cases was it proved that reading comic books was the cause of the delinquency. A good many of the delinquents mentioned happened to be readers of comic magazines just as are 69,999,975 perfectly healthy, happy, normal American boys and girls, men and women, who also read the comics. It is just as ridiculous to suppose that 69,999,975 people are law-abiding citizens just because they are comic-book readers as it is to suppose that twenty-five others are depraved criminals due to the same reading habits.



"Instead of just sitting there reading Malthus, why don't you help out around here?"

Capable as Dr. Wertham may be in the psychoanalyzation of adults, I certainly do not believe him able to deal equally as well with children, due to his fanatic hatred and prejudice toward comic books. From reading his article I get the impression that this feeling colors all of his investigations and reports. It appears that his $64 question to a child being psychoanalyzed is, "Do you read COMIC BOOKS, my little man?" Of course the juvenile delinquent being a normal child in at least that way, will answer, "Yes."

"Ah ha," says Dr. Wertham. "This child is a juvenile delinquent. This child reads comic books. Therefore it is because he reads comic books that he is a juvenile delinquent." This is enough for Dr. Wertham.



McDonough Studios.

David Pace Wigransky: "It is high time that we become as serious as our attackers."

I seriously doubt if the children and adolescents interviewed by Dr. Wertham would even bring up the subject of comic books at all if he did not first bring it up himself. Being a psychiatrist, he must be able to do an expert job of leading them on, mixing them up, getting them excited, and generally unnerving them. He stirs them up over the subject of comic books just as he has the ability to do on any subject, and then records their nervously blurted-out remarks to use in his attacks on comic books.

This crusade against comics is nothing new. It all began back in 1896 with the conception of "The Yellow Kid," after whom was named "yellow journalism," so christened by preachers and clergy who preached entire sermons against the little Chinese boy who had leaped from the pen of Richard Felton Outcault. This criticism grew and grew until it seemed that it could grow no more. Then came the comic book, the newer and greater offspring of the comic strip. This opened up a new field to the critics. They began ignoring the quieter newspaper strip to transfer their opposition to the magazines. This unwarranted and vicious attack is now at its height, led by such fanatics as Dr. Wertham and John Mason Brown. The defenders of comic books occasionally write a good-natured article in answer to the deadly serious and bitter articles written against them. It is high time that we who are on the defensive become as serious as are our attackers. We didn't ask for this fight, but we are in it to the finish. The fate of millions of children hangs in the balance. We owe it to them to continue to give them the reading matter which they have come to know and love.

Dr. Wertham seems to believe that adults should have the perfect right to read anything they please, no matter how vulgar, how vicious, or how

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depraving, simply because they are adults. Children, on the other hand, should be kept in utter and complete ignorance of anything and everything except the innocuous and sterile world that the Dr. Werthams of the world prefer to keep them prisoner within from birth to maturity. The net result of all this, however, is that when they have to someday grow up, they will be thrust into an entirely different kind of world, a world of violence and cruelty, a world of force and competition, an impersonal world in which they will have to fight their own battles, afraid, insecure, helpless.

The whole argument over comic magazines is very silly and needless. The kids know what they want. They are individuals with minds of their own, and very definite tastes in everything. Just because they happen to disagree with him, Dr. Wertham says that they do not know how to discriminate. It is time that society woke up to the fact that children are human beings with opinions of their own, instead of brainless robots to be ordered hither and yon without even so much as asking them their ideas about anything. To be a child psychiatrist, one should be able to look at things through the eyes of a child. If a child is told not to read a comic book, he will break his neck to do it. This is not wilful stubbornness, but a perfectly normal revolt against a world of giants who seem to be doing nothing but what they please. He wants to be like them, and at the same time he hates and resents them for their high-handed superiority.

The comic-book publishers know what the kids want and try to give it to them. This is not only democratic policy but good business sense. A child looks upon crime and violence as ideal adventure and excitement. He has no desire to experience these things in actual form, and knows them only as fun, and not in their true ugliness. The adult, on the other hand, has had actual experiences along this line, and looks upon fighting and violent action as loathsome and horrid. A typical example of all this is the soldier who longs for home and his kid brother who would give his right arm to be out there fighting alongside him.

The child, having never been an adult, cannot be expected to understand the adult point of view. The adult, on the other hand, was once a child, and should therefore realize that this craving for horror is not for actual physical violence but for imaginary violence in the form of comics, radio, movies, or a good game of "Cops 'n' Robbers," the last of which I am sure was enjoyed many years before the other three had even been thought of. If all the Dr. Werthams in the world would realize this, the greatest barrier between parent-child mutual understanding would be automatically removed.

If let alone by the Dr. Werthams and John Mason Browns, I think the comic-reading kids will turn out all right, as did the present generation, the first brought up on comic books. Let any who starts to raise his voice in protest to this generation, first compare it with any preceding one. I am certain that he will discover the cards are stacked in favor of the comic-book readers of the present age.

DAVID PACE WIGRANSKY.

Washington, D. C.

SIR: Congratulations on Dr. Wertham's splendid article. Most librarians, both college and public, have long felt the evils of comics but have been unable to do much about it as the rooting out is a question of the publishing business. However, public opinion can do much and an article like yours ought to help tremendously.

MOTHER ST. LAWRENCE.

Rosemont, Pa.

SIR: The comics are very bad in spots, but what does Dr. Wertham think should be done about the Bible?

Right after his article appeared, I heard a mother tell her friends that her four-year-old daughter just loves the Bible stories, and every night asks to have the one read "where God kills all the little babies." Other favorites are "where the boys throw Joseph down the well" and "where God has the men kill Jesus."

The wrong kind of comics is bad for children; so is the wrong kind of religion. They would be better off without any comics and religious stories. As long as it is profitable for the trade to sell bad comics and for the churches to furnish low-grade religion, the children will probably be supplied with both products. They should be getting something better.

E. M. HUNT.

White Plains, N. Y.

SIR: The article "The Comics . . . Very Funny!" was a shock to me as I never read comics of any kind, and had the idea they were merly stories in pictures. I knew they were not funny.

My thirteen-year-old son reads them by the ton. I have not noticed any of the reverberations mentioned in the article in his conduct, but perhaps I am as blind to that as I have been to the comics. I know lots of interesting teen-agers and am interested in them.

Would you and/or the author now please tell me what I can do about this? I would appreciate it. Of course, I mean I and other mothers? It would be impossible for me to stop my son from reading them. I know that.

LOIS ECKSTEN.

Kansas City, Mo.

SIR: As the wife of a psychiatrist, the mother of three children, and the president of the local branch of the American Association of University Women, I say a fervent "Amen!"

Our Colorado Springs branch of AAUW has done some work on comic books, and it is being taken up as a statewide project. I discussed the matter at national headquarters in Washington last month and hope I can get some action from them. I do feel that aritcles like yours, in national publications, can have more benefit than any other medium.

MRS. PAUL DRAPER.

Colorado Springs, Colo.

SIR: It seems to me that a campaign among parents and teachers could be effective in suppressing the comics. Or effective if other forces joined in.

The National Council of Parents and Teachers, Chicago 5, Ill., is headquarters of a nationwide group. I have written to them about your article and suggested it be read and action taken.

I do hope *The Readers Digest* will reprint your article. How can it not do so?

So far our children aren't criminals, but their language and attitudes definitely deteriorate subsequent to reading comics. We storm, forbid, but there's always a comic available somewhere.

I pray there will be drastic changes made in publications of this nature. If so, we will have you to thank.

AGNES W. RANDENTASH.

St. Paul, Minn.

A Brighter Note at S. U. I.

SIR: I hope the following news story may give you encouragement as to the situation at our Iowa university. Your fine critical comment on the former incident ["Bystanders Are Not Innocent," *SRL* Aug. 8, 1947] was necessary, and I am sure helped to make this demonstration possible.

MRS. GEORGE KRATTSCH.

Des Moines, Ia.

Incidents which occur in the classroom at the University of Iowa seldom are reported. But one which happened the other day deserves some kind of special mention.

A course, entitled "Religion in Human Culture," of which Dr. Howard Thurman, a noted religious leader, is the lecturer, was meeting Wednesday for its final lecture session.

This class, a core course, is an unusually large one, numbering nearly 300 students. It is so large that during the semester its sessions have been held in the chemistry auditorium.

At the close of this final meeting, Doctor Thurman ended his lecture, gathered up his papers, and prepared to leave, in his customary manner. But the students, instead of jumping from their seats to hurry to the next class, did a strange and heart-warming thing.

These 300 students never budged from their seats when the lecture was over. Doctor Thurman hardly had finished speaking, when the class burst into spontaneous, vigorous applause that continued, according to some of the students present, for at least two to three minutes.

Such lengthy applause for a professor in the classroom, is, in itself, unusual. Besides that, the spontaneity and sincerity of it made it probably one of the finest tributes a teacher ever could receive from his students.

But the deep significance of it lies in the fact that Doctor Thurman is a Negro and he has been speaking on a campus which less than a year ago had to admit the unfortunate incident of the beating of a Jewish student.

—*Des Moines Register & Tribune.*

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Nature. *North Americans are apt to forget that the history of the American world began far to the south of us. It should not be forgotten that Columbus first touched the New World in the Caribbean, far from our Northern climes. Hispaniola, one of the islands Columbus discovered, was lushly tropical, " . . . full of trees of endless varieties, so high that they seem to touch the sky," he wrote in 1493. "I saw them as green and lovely as trees are in Spain in the month of May. . . . There is honey, and there are many kinds of birds, and a great variety of fruits. . . . Hispaniola is a marvel." . . . One of the by-products of the early voyages was the discovery in South America of a new world for the naturalists, celebrated in an unusual anthology by Victor von Hagen, reviewed below.*

From the New World to the Old

THE GREEN WORLD OF THE NATURALISTS: A Treasury of Five Centuries of Natural History in South America. Selected by Victor Wolfgang von Hagen. New York: Greenberg. 1948. 392 *pp.* $5.

Reviewed by NORMAN TAYLOR

PINEAPPLES and peanuts, corn and chocolate, cosmos and cocaine, quinine and quebracho, potatoes and sweet potatoes, tomatoes and tobacco —what would the world be without them and who would not have liked to be the first to see them? Add vanilla and the dahlia, the Amazon and the Andes, and we can perhaps glean a little of what the New World contributed to the Old. Not one of them was known before a handful of Spanish and Portuguese freebooters came trooping to America after Columbus returned with his fabulous tale of what he called "The Indies."

The compiler of this admirable anthology well knows that the first-hand impressions of early discoverers, scientists, and of some later writers is the best method of giving us spontaneous and fresh pictures of the colossal impact of "the new founde world" upon Europe. No one not in love with the country, steeped in its literature, and with a knowledgeable acquaintance with the importance of key figures in the drama could possibly have made such a good selection. Some of what is here reprinted is unavailable to those who do not read Spanish and Portuguese, and even if they do some of the originals are hard to come by. To make it even easier for the general reader the author has written short sketches of each of the twenty-five writers that he has chosen to reprint, as well as an annotated account of where each fits into the pattern of exploration or discovery. Some of them have become world figures, such as Darwin, Humboldt, Alfred Russell Wallace, Melville, and La Condamine.

But others are not so well-known, although one of them, Gaspar de Carvajal, wrote the first description of the Amazon. A Dominican monk, he was chosen by Francisco de Orellana to accompany that intrepid group of Spaniards who, building a boat at the foot of the Andes, first floated down the 3000 miles of what we today know is the greatest river in the world. That was in 152, just after Pizzaro had conquered Peru.

One of the earliest pieces is a letter by the man for whom America was named, Amerigo Vespucci, to Lorenzo de Medici, in 1503. He headed it "Mundus Novus" ("This New World") thereby setting at rest the error of Columbus who died thinking he had found a new way of getting to China instead of discovering a brand New World. The compiler does not mention the historical doubt as to the date of Vespucci's account which is certainly in question if one follows Professor Morison's circumstantial exposure of the pre-dating of Vespucci's letter in his scholarly "Admiral of the Ocean Sea."

Among other classical writers who made the New World known to the Old, Mr. Van Hagen has chosen parts of Oviedo's "Natural History of the Indies," a book which among other marvels printed the first picture of a tobacco pipe. Antonio de Ulloa and Felix de Azara, as well as the piratical pilgrimage of Lionel Wafer, "Chyrageon to Buccaneers," are also included to spike a tale that needs little to make it of absorbing interest.

The inclusion of the moderns such as Tomlinson, Guenther, Beebe, Chapman, Hudson, etc., will please those for whom good writing is more important than the main purpose of the book. There may be some who would have left out part of the modern, and hence easily available, material, to make room for Cieza de Leon's "Chronicles of Peru" where one finds the first account of the potato, and Garcilasso de la Vega's "Royal Commentaries of the Incas," almost the first book to tell us of cocoa and the life of Inca Bolivia. Also, the usefulness of the book would have been greatly increased by an index.

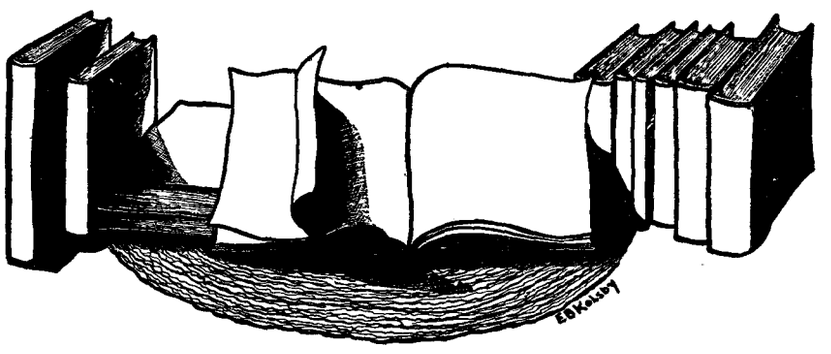
The compilation is scholarly, extremely interesting, and the biographical and background material enhance the value of a book that should appeal to all interested in South America.

Bean-Barn Edition

A THOREAU GAZETTEER. By Robert F. Stowell. Calais, Vt.: The Poor Farm Press. 1948. *Nine maps and text.* 75 *cents.*

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

ALL lovers of Thoreau will want to know of this little collection of nine maps, several of them hitherto unpublished, the new ones by Mr. Stowell himself, who has done the printing in his own bean barn and is now resting after his labors by building a chicken coop. Here are maps to make more intelligible Thoreau's books on the Maine woods, on Cape Cod, on his trip to Canada, and other expeditions. The Cape Cod and Canadian maps are Thoreau's own, as of course the famous one of Walden Pond. The others are Mr. Stowell's. It's a good job and I think no Thoreauvian will wish to reread the famous books without this gazetteer at hand. The bean-barn edition is small and purchasers should act quickly.



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Seeing Things

ELIA VERSUS CHARLES

AN affectionate rather than a passionate man, Charles Lamb's prejudices were his substitutes for passion. It was in them that he lived, and because of them, in part, that he lives for us. They were the proofs of his awareness, his sensibility, his discernment, his humanity. Characteristically enough, he chose to refer to these prejudices as "imperfect sympathies" no less than as prejudices.

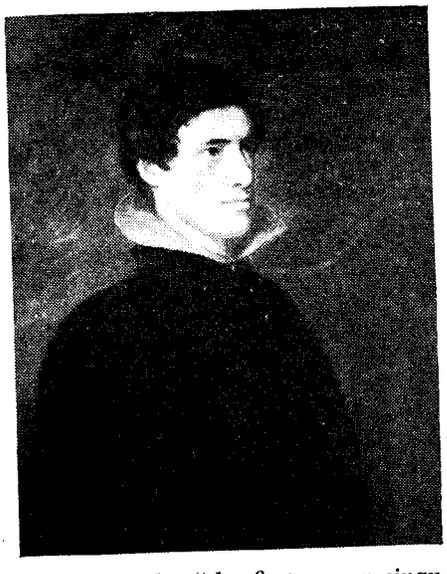
One of the major paradoxes of his paradoxical mind was that, as a rule, he could be sympathetic even when he was being witty. His wit was the expression of his love, not his contempt, for men. People who would have irritated others amused him. His knowledge of life was too complete for him to be surprised by human frailty. If he never failed to observe it, he seldom failed to enjoy it. Since he expected it, he was tolerant of it.

His was the laughter of acceptance not protest, of recognition instead of revulsion. His gaiety was as divorced from scorn or cynicism as it was wedded to melancholy. It smiles without being insulting. Unchilled by the arrogance which is the curse of professional wits, it is as warm and human as the "rather smoky, and sometimes rather drinky" little man from whom it emanated. It sprang from a superior mind, unconscious of its superiority; a mind which is the more endearing because its modesty remains unlost in the midst of its most dazzling exhibitions of prowess.

Lamb's mind was the antithesis of neat and office-like. It resembled an antique shop or an old bookstore where, in spite of the clutter, the dust, and the overlay of accumulation, the proprietor can at a moment's notice bring to light whatever treasure is desired. It never judged "system-wise" but always by "fastening on particulars." It was proudly unmethodized, desultory, tangential. If it worked obliquely in ways beyond prediction, it was because it fed upon the tantalizing obliquities of life no less than of literature. Its knowledge was a matter of informed tastes rather than of pursued facts.

Lamb had no desire to keep up with the Joneses. He had a hard enough time keeping up with the whims of his own interest. The topical left him uncoerced; the popular unpersuaded. When a new book came out, he read an old one. He would have been both amused and amazed by the manuals, digests, and sugarcoated textbooks in which those who mistake facts for learning nowadays stalk culture as if it were a butterfly to be pionioned in a net. Although the most bookish of bookish men, he was no chaser after information for information's sake. Instead, he was a savorer, content to taste and retaste what was best or most flavorsome in the volumes he cherished. If his devotion to what was special, limited, and wayward in his preoccupations was one of his limitations, this did not bother him. Lamb was comfortable in his ignorance of what he did not choose to know.

On all matters relating to science, Elia could boast he was "a whole Encyclopaedia behind the rest of the world." He was equally, and just as proudly, unknowledgeable about geography, modern languages, the shapes and textures of the commonest trees, herbs, or flowers, and tools, engines, or mechanic processes. In spite of his attachment to the past, history as a mere sequence of events had so little interest for him that he could brag he had never deliberately sat down to read a chronicle even of his own country. As for astronomy, it did not exist in the orbit of his shining concerns. "If the sun," wrote he, "on some portentous morn were to make his first appearance in the West, I verily believe that, while all the world were gasping in apprehension about me, I alone should stand unterrified, from sheer incuriosity and want of observation."



Charles Lamb—"the first person singular was a favorite pronoun . . . somehow managed to seem printed with a small 'i'."

One of the reasons for Elia's dislike of the Scotch was that no excursions could be taken with them, since they always insisted upon keeping to the path. Lamb's thinking, though it could lead to the summits, was nothing if not excursive. The straight highroads dear to historians were not the routes he either elected or was equipped to travel. When he did not spurn the obvious views and inevitable sights, he preferred to reach them by a back door or secret passage. He gave both his mind and heart (the combination, in his case, meaning his attention) to the ignored vistas and overlooked curiosities. Even these he approached by those unblazed trails which, to the personal essayist, are the royal road.

If these footpaths were roads which led to himself, the reason was his modesty, not his egotism. Lamb was one of the most autobiographical of authors. To read him on virtually any subject is to read about him. It is to know him with a sense of daily intimacy with which few writers are known. In his copy Lamb could no more escape from himself than in his living he could leave Mary. Yet self-centered in the ordinary sense, he was not. The world, for the conceited man, starts and ends with himself. For Elia, Charles Lamb was merely the point of departure to the world around him. Although with him the first person singular was a favorite pronoun, as he used it, it somehow managed to seem printed with a small "i."

LAMB was too unpretentious to pretend to be omniscient. He was poignantly aware that few people are able to speak for themselves, much less for others. Speaking of and through himself was his way of speaking for all. He knew his own voice contained the echoes of other voices. In this way he chose to write, intertwining with his identity griefs and affections which were not his own, "making himself many, or reducing many unto himself."

Since truth to Lamb was as personal as everything else, facts enjoyed no immunity from his prankishness. It diverted him to distort them when, as Elia, he wrote of his friends, his family, or himself. His love of mystification was one of the abidingly boyish aspects of his character. It pleased him in his essays to mislead his readers by false scents; to write Oxford when he meant Cambridge; to make Bridget his cousin, not his sister; to merge Coleridge's boyhood with his own; or to paint himself as a hopeless drunkard when, as a matter of fact,

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Ev'gs. 8:30. Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:30

he was a man who, though he loved to down a drink, was seldom downed by drinking. By deliberate, sometimes mischievous, design his familiar essays were but the "shadows of fact." They were "verisimilitudes, not verities." Yet Lamb was present, quintessentially if not factually, in their every phrase and sentence. At least, an important part of him was present, though not by any means the whole man.

Closely related as Elia is to Charles Lamb, they were not—they are not—in any sense of the word identical. When it came to authorship, there were two Charles Lambs. If not that, there was, at any rate, one Lamb who wrote in two styles so different that he could be suspected of employing his left hand for the one, his right hand for the other. As in the case of countless others, ink-stained or ink-free, Lamb had a public and a private manner. He did not write to his friends as he wrote for the magazines. Although in either case a natural-born essayist, and a matchless critic of books and men, his style, which was always intimate, altered according to whether his pen or a printer was to be the transmitter of his words.

Hazlitt's portrait of him as a nobleman of another day caught the spirit, not of Lamb the private letter-writer, but of Lamb the public essayist. Certainly, the Lamb who contributed to periodicals was not the Renaissance figure Hazlitt envisaged. Yet Hazlitt was right beyond dispute in dressing this Lamb in the clothes of an age other than his own. When he wrote for publication, Lamb did go into costume as surely as, when he dashed off notes to his friends, he donned a dress so modern that after the passage of more than a century it seems as contemporary to us as it did to them.

The highly, at moments even dangerously, self-conscious artist we cherish as Elia emerged late in Lamb's life as the flowering of his varied career as a professional writer. By that time Lamb had long since mislaid, except for album purposes, the poet of slight endowment he had started out by being. Years before, too, he had discarded the novelist whose all but nonexistent talent for narrative stamped "Rosamund Gray" and his contributions to "Mrs. Leicester's School" as no more than apprentice work. He had also buried the dramatist with "no head for playwriting" whose blank-verse tragedy "John Woodvil" was but the feeblest of Elizabethan echoes, and whose little farce "Mr. H....." was so disastrous a failure that its author had joined in the hissing.

In the same way Lamb had outgrown those un-Lamb-like "Tales from Shakespeare" upon which he had col-

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laborated with Mary. Although he had predicted such a potboiler would be popular "among the little people," he had never guessed how enduring its popularity would prove among those grownups of little courage who, apparently, are grateful for anything which spares them Shakespeare in the original.

The first volume of the "Elia" essays was published when Lamb was forty-eight; the second, and last, ten years later. In print, and in such memorable papers as his "On the Genius and Character of Hogarth" and "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare," Lamb had already established not only his brilliance as a critic but his unique public manner as an essayist. Yet during all these formative years, in fact from his first preserved letters to Coleridge before and after Mary's murder of her mother, right down to the last note scribbled off to Mrs. Dyer (about a book, appropriately enough) five days before his death thirty-eight years later, Lamb was the possessor of an epistolary style quite at odds with the style we know as Elia's.

More than being the best introduction to Lamb, Lamb's are among the world's best letters. In them we almost hear him talk. To be sure, his stutter is gone, and an incredible fluency has replaced it. But, as in all good letters, the illusion of direct communication is maintained. Both the moment and the mood are captured in all the heat of their passing sorrow or amusement. The small details, the great agonies, the first impressions, the play of mind and the play on words, the reflections by means of which a particular instance is lifted into a generality, the tastes of food, the smells of London, the look of friends, the resume of last night's party, the book just read, the anecdote just heard, this day's sadness, the next day's gaiety—they are all there, caught hot, caught frankly, and transferred without effort by a pen scratching swiftly against stolen time at the office.

PERHAPS the speed of their composition was the guarantee of their simplicity. In any case, again and again Charles's letters deny their datelines by remaining undated. They are not so much the products of an age as they are models for all time. Whether they are "thank-you" notes for a visit paid or a roast pig sent; apologies for having to be carried home from an overconvivial evening; his proposal of marriage to Fanny Kelly; the gossip of London dispatched across the oceans to Manning in China; religious musings; discussions of death; the account to Coleridge, magnificent in his whole life. Their every episodic appraisals of Defoe, Cervantes, Godwin's "Chaucer," or the second edition of the "Lyrical Ballads," they are perfect of their kind.

They show the warmth, the originality, the humor, or the grandeur of the astonishing little man who wrote them. They are the spontaneous distillations of a writer, instinctive and superior. They make us companions not only in Lamb's daily living but in his whole life. Their every episodic entry fits into a sequence. Without meaning to do so, they form an autobiography from which Lamb's biographers must quote and to which everyone who would know him must turn. They give us Lamb unadorned; Lamb, the writer, without self-consciousness, hence often at his finest; Lamb, so to speak, at his slippered ease, relaxed, using short sentences, hitting directly; Lamb employing the most vivid and abrupt of colloquialisms, thus avoiding the calculated, beautiful, and antique cadences so dear to Elia.

The difference between the letter-writer who signed himself C.L. and the essayist known as Elia is the difference between a candid camera close-up and a full-length portrait in

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Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE CASE OF THE CURIOUS CLIENT *Christopher Bush* (Macmillan: $2.50)	Ludovic Travers, hired on phone by apprehensive client, finds him murdered. Another death occurs before Travers and Scotland Yarder Wharton bring killer to bay.	Suave Travers-Wharton methods of dealing with group of unpleasant people are attractive, even if unexpected outcome leaves one rather cold.	Traditional English
THE KING AND THE CORPSE *Max Murray* (Farrar-Straus: $2.50)	Slimy character, found dead on French bathing-beach, involves exiled king, pretty English girl, her pa, and resourceful Anthony Todworth.	Murder with wartime roots, considerable Wodehousian comedy, sundry spots of excitement, agreeably skittish royalty, and solution rather pat—but pleasing.	Lively
THE CRADLE AND THE GRAVE *Aaron Marc Stein* (Crime Club: $2.)	Tim Mulligan and Elsie Mae Hunt, visiting friend at GI college, encounter two murders and baby-snatching, which they solve satisfactorily.	People interesting, especially tight little group of ex-Marine pals, action sufficient, detection sharp-eyed, and solution tragically unexpected.	Good Enough
AMONG THOSE ABSENT *Manning Coles* (Crime Club: $2.)	Tommy Hambledon, turning convict to smash English gang specializing in jail-breaks, gallops madly through mass murders and hairbreadth escapes.	Not since Edgar Wallace in his prime have there been such gay, gory, preposterous, and incessantly exciting goings-on.	Excitingly wild—and vice versa

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oil, appareled for effect and so posed that its very casualness is studied. It is the difference between jewels unset and a necklace painstakingly matched. It is, in short, the everlasting difference between the impromptu and the planned.

When Thackeray's "Saint Charles" wrote for the public prints, he heard voices, Joan-wise. The sonorities of such favorite prose writers as Sir Thomas Browne, Burton, Marvell, and Fuller haunted his ears. "I gather myself up into the old things," wrote Lamb. More accurately, he gathered the old authors up into himself. Their outmoded language was an expression of what was backward-glancing in his spirit. It pleased him by being out of date. It orchestrated his melancholy. Not only that. When appropriated for his casual personal essays, its very gravity served as a foil to his humor.

Lamb loved the stately rhythms and obsolete words of these older writers. While playing chameleon to their style, he could achieve a style of his own. He imitated in order to create what is inimitable. The borrowed pencil Hazlitt accused him of employing as an essayist was put by Lamb to his own uses. He was aware that, as Elia, his writings were "villainously pranked in an affected arrangement of antique modes and phrases." But he knew these writings would not have been his, had this not been so. "Better it is," said he, "that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him."

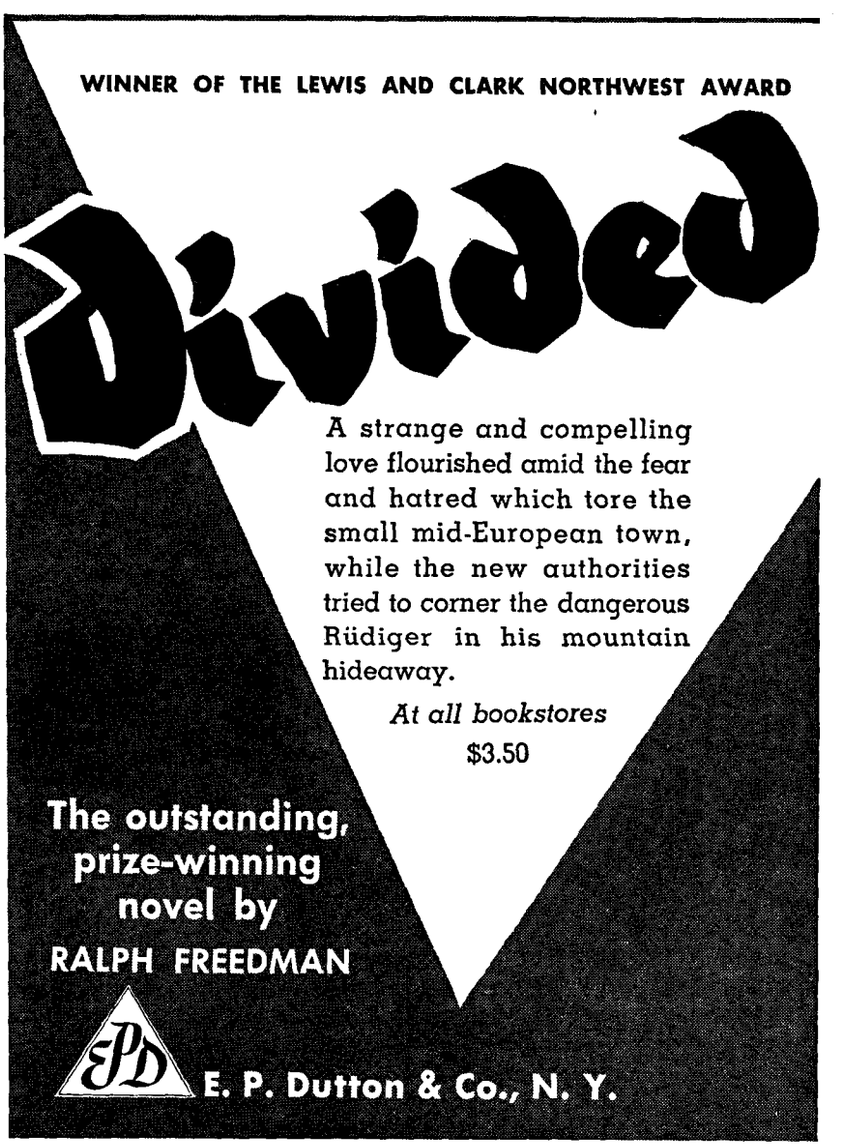
Quaint Elia was, and is, and in a manner pleasing not only to himself but to readers everywhere once they have become Elians. This is no hard thing to do, if only in a more hurried age, when prose is thinner and the language employed more often than it is enjoyed, readers are willing to give Elia and themselves a chance. His essays never were *in date,* except for what is dateless in their insight. Stylistically, they were intentional anachronisms when they were published. Their antique flavor was, and remains, a source of their charm.

To modern eyes, accustomed as they are to sentences being the shortest distance between a subject and a predicate (if, indeed, they extend that far), the long, leisurely, and intricate constructions of Lamb the essayist may at first glance appear forbidding. Yet forbidding is the very last word anyone in his right senses, and with the slightest acquaintance with Lamb, would dream of using for those gloriously warm and intimate essays which Lamb wrote as a critic of life, or of art, the theatre, and books. If, at the outset, their subtle and sustained sentences seem difficult, with their "methink's," their "thee's" and "thou's," their "art's," "wert's," "reader's," and other pressed flowers from another day, or their addiction to such words as "agnise," "additaments," and "dulcifying," these difficulties soon turn into delights. However truffled, archaic, or self-conscious was Lamb's formal style, it is rich in its rewards. Costume prose it may be, but costume jewelry it never was since its gems are genuine.

More than taking knowing, Elia survives it. His better essays belong in that class of literature he described as being "perpetually self-reproductive." They bear reading and rereading, and then can be read and reread again. They are habit-forming rather than time-passing. If the style in their case is not the whole man, it is at any rate the essayist. Elia cannot be separated from it. Nor would anyone who has once cultivated a taste for that style be denied its enjoyment. Although, as a word-man, Lamb was deaf to music and could complain about its "measured malice," Elia was able with words to release an incomparable music of his own.

He was the opposite of those writers he dismissed as being "economists only in delight." His prodigality with the pleasures he provides is limitless. The joy he creates from small things is large. The conceits in his phrasing are redeemed by the sincerity of his feeling. If he seldom wrote a bromide, it was because he seldom thought one. The commonest reaction became uncommon in his statement of it. His vocabulary was as much his own as his mind, and both were unpredictable.

As is true of all good essayists, not too much of Elia is to be read at one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sitting. He fatigues not by the ardor of his emotions, but by the incessant probing of his perceptions, by the sudden quiet dartings of his mind and the abundance of his allusions. To be enjoyed fully he must be lingered over; read with the same disregard for the present that he showed; savored, as he savored the subjects of his choice. He is a writer who does not raise his voice. He avoids emphasis. His finest phrases spill from his pen without warning. They are tucked away, not paraded. They come jostling, one so close upon the other that they are apt to be overlooked. To miss them is to miss the true satisfactions of Elia, because in his phrases he gives the pleasures other authors give in their paragraphs.

His mood is ruminative, his mind associational. For all the amusement to be had from the felicities of his observations, his was an essentially tragic nature. He was a tragedian who smiled instead of cried. More than deepening his humor, this insures its humanity.

On the subject of his family, his youth, his London, the places he had visited, or the "characters" he had known, his vision was as detailed and unblinking as it was in his criticism. Yet, uncanny as was his accuracy as a reporter, Lamb was never a journalist. What he wrote as journalism somehow managed to be literature. "In Eternity," pointed out Sir Thomas Browne, "there is no distinction of Tenses." This line in the "Religio Medici" was one which, as both a familiar essayist and a magazine critic, Lamb must have hugged to his heart. For him datelines did not exist. He had no interest in news and less sense of it. News, as he saw it, was whatever happened to interest him, however personal or remote. The measure of his ability is that he made it interesting to his contemporaries, and even now makes us feel contemporaneous with it.

As a critic no less than as a man, Lamb lived in a world where watches had stopped. Yet he creates the illusion that they are still ticking. What he was fond of reviewing was not last night's or last week's play but his memories of twenty or thirty years ago. Although this was all a part of his being unable to make present times present to him, it has never prevented him from making times past present to us.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

This is the third of a series of articles on Charles Lamb. The last will appear next week. These will serve as the introduction to "The Viking Portable Library Charles Lamb."

The New Recordings

COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS	ENGINEERING		PERFORMANCE AND CONTENT
	Recording Technique	*Surface*	
SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN FOLK MUSIC			
KENTUCKY MOUNTAIN BALLADS. Cousin Emmy, Assorted accomp. Decca 574 (4 10″)	Coarse, popular style recording, but with considerable tonal range, good surfaces. Excellent balance.	A	A hard-bitten professional hill-billy radio singer, Cousin E. puts on a show, but genuine—no Broadway. Racy style, fine accomp. herself & others.
BLUE RIDGE BALLADS. Texas Gladden, Hobart Smith. Disc 707 (4 10″)	Too bad Mrs. Gladden's voice is more raucous than in real life—mike too close to her. Otherwise good, though highs missing.	A—	This is non-professional, closer to backwoods. Texas G. behind her raucous voice is a superb musician. Brother Smith sings too, plays practically everything.
STRAVINSKY			
STRAVINSKY, BAISER DE LA FÉE (FAIRY'S KISS); DIVERTIMENTO (1928). Stravinsky, RCA Victor Symph. RCA Victor DM 1202 (3)	Good resonant recording, only moderate tonal range. Could do with more, for more rhythmic "edge."	AA	Not one of best Strav. works, but a good piece, easy listening, thanks to use of Tchaikovsky themes. Delightful Swiss dance episodes, à la Petrouchka.
STRAVINSKY, CONCERTINO (1920); 3 PIECES FOR STR. QUARTET (1914). Gordon String Quartet. Concert Hall B6 (2 *pl.*) (*Subscription only*)	Splendid resonant recording helps immeasurably to make this music listenable. Big, full sound, harshness melowed, rhythm strengthened.		Once shocking—"Concertino" acid but expressive, intelligible, strongly rhythmed. Three pieces are sassily eccentric, using quartet for astonishing sound effects, revolutionary at the time.
BAROQUE MUSIC			
BUXTEHUDE, ORGAN MUSIC. Carl Weinrich, "Praetorius" Organ, Princeton. *Musicraft* 40 (4) (*Reissue*)	Acoustically dead—no echo, as all the recordings this organ; but this music suffers less than in Bach albums. No highs; not important.	A	A valuable reissue. Splendid pre-Bach music, quite unlike Bach. Much humor, gaiety, calliope-style tone colors, unBach-like casualness of organization. Correct Baroque organ.
BACH, BRANDENBURG CONCERTO #6. Boston Symphony, Koussevitzky. J. Pasquale, J. Cauhape, violas. RCA Victor DM 1211 (3)	This is by far best realization to date of dark tone of this work (no violins, only low strings). Good balance, solo group clear, distinct. Poor musical breaks.	A	Heavyweight Bach dies hard! This is a big improvement over symphonic Bach: smaller group, excellent solo concertino. But K's heavy hand keeps symphonic anachronism alive. Dreadful ritards. Piano. Confusing album notes.
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC			
DELLO JOIO, TRIO FOR FLUTE, CELLO, PIANO. Julius Baker, Daniel Saidenberg, Leonid Hambro. Concert Hall B13 (2 *pl.*) (*Subscription only*)	Superb surfaces, good resonance, clarity, balance. Piano weakish on bass, flute buzzes on some of loudest peaks; otherwise a fine recording.	AA+	Fully contemporary in style, but surprisingly inoffensive, easy to listen to. Lively, good-humored, skilfully, contrapuntally written. Nice piece.
JANACEK, CONCERTINO FOR PIANO, STRINGS, WIND INSTR (1925). R. Firkusny, pf. and Ensemble. Concert Hall B10 (2 *pl.*) (*Subscription only*)	Very clear, close-up recording. Clarinet too close—it squawks. Others give fine effect of ensemble variety.	AA	Dogmatic, hard, intense music, one of last works of an early pioneer in modernism. Insistent, yet fragmentary in rhythm. Not easy, but a strong piece.

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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FICTION

(*Continued from page* 14)

psychologists and Communists and homosexuals he has met, all very racy and simple in quick, folksy talk. And about Leta Wilkins, that queer girl who wants no love from him (has he any to give?).

And yet, for all that this is an intimate diary turned open before us, and Mr. Scheinfeld a practised student of the secret mind, the story is curiously unemotional. Mr. Scheinfeld says that Jerry says he is suffering—it is twice removed from reality. Any competent novelist with a good deal less of scientific background than Mr. Scheinfeld's would have been able to get inside Jerry and give him to us with some approximation of breathing credibility. As he is, Jerry writes his diary of love and search like a bright investigator taking notes among the wards. I don't believe in him, I don't feel convinced about his love for Wendy, gone, or for Leta, coming. And I don't see much in his random discoveries on the way; his sketches of New York Communists and Provincetown "queens" are equally facile and incomplete. I should say that Mr. Scheinfeld has sacrificed much of his scientific integrity in going from the essay to the novel, without having come up with any compensatory quality as a creator.

Burns's Lassies

THE SONG IN THE GREENTHORN TREE. By James Barke. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1948. 456 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT E. SPILLER

THE HISTORICAL novel is common enough today if one were to judge by the best-seller lists, but the novel of personal history is a rarer form. Here is no technicolor epic of a fabulous hero and his violent adventures and loves in far times and places. Rather it is the simple and honest narrative of two years (1784-86) in the life of the Scottish poet Robert Burns.

In those years Burns, after the death of his father, took over the headship of the family and moved to the unpromising farm of Gavin Hamilton at Mossgiel near Machlin Town, hoping to make a new start. Here his worldly fortunes once more sank as he divided his time between the hard work of farming and the more rewarding pleasures of writing and publishing the first volume of his poetry in nearby Kilmarnock. But two other forces made living, at the least, exciting. On the one hand were the lassies: Betsy Patton, the mother of his first child, now left behind in Largieside; the alluring Jean Armour, whom he "married" under the Greenthorn tree; "Highland Mary" Campbell, to whom he turned in his distress when Jean's father broke up his daughter's affair, and others. For Burns had a fatal love of the lassies, which, as his poems testify, was none the less pure for being plural. But on the other side was the stern "Daddy" Auld and the prying "Holie Willie." The church had real power over private lives in those days and it did not look with complacency on such doings. For James Barke, the second of his novels on Burns's life had a ready-made plot. All he had to decide was whether Jean or Mary should have the novelist's sympathy, for the novelist could not be as impartial as his hero. That choice made (and he follows Snyder's interpretation of the facts), the story wrote itself.

Mr. Barke is not a novelist of the first order, but he can spin out a tale and he can throw his readers' sympathies in such fashion as to carry them with his characters through the stress and strain of their complex lives. That the outcome of the story is already known—for Mr. Barke holds close to his quite acceptable interpretation of the controversial circumstances—robs the informed reader of some suspense. Perhaps it is better not to know Burns's life in advance for the facts carry their own suspense to the unknowing. Robert Burns lives in these pages as a romantic young poet-farmer, beset by ambition, love of life, financial difficulties, social censorship, and incipient ill-

Correction

Hal McIntosh, rather than Frances O'Brien, should have been credited for *SRL*'s cover drawing of July 17.

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ness, but driven on by a wholly delightful sincerity and the gift of naive emotion to which expression in both life and song is free and inevitable. Put this one down merely as honest writing and mildly entertaining reading.

Eurasian Nightingale

RED SUN SOUTH. By Oswald Wynd. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1948. 276 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by BRADFORD SMITH

WHEN the Japanese occupied Singapore, Elizabeth Rennforth, a war-widowed Eurasian nurse, became matron of a civilian hospital from which all the English nurses were carried off to internment. Her struggle to keep the hospital operating in spite of Japanese indifference, inefficiency, and cruelty provides the principal matter of this second novel by the author of "Black Fountains," winner of the 1947 Doubleday Prize Novel Award.

Well, there is plenty of material here for excitement—an underground movement against the Japanese in which Elizabeth, her sister Mary, and her brother are all involved; gunfights, torture, ambushes, and hair's-breadth escapes. There is also a credible rendering of the way occupation must have been. Elizabeth's heroic job of keeping the hospital going by a skilful handling of the Japanese contributes a useful understanding of the role of the collaborator. Mr. Wynd, who served in Malaya with British Intelligence and was subsequently captured and taken to Japan where he had been born, is in a position to know whereof he speaks.

Cruelly beaten by the Japanese in an attempt to learn the secrets of the underground after her brother was cornered and shot, Elizabeth gains the protection of Captain Hagamoto of Japanese Intelligence. Hagamoto, also a Eurasian, has adopted allegiance to Japan as his solution of the Eurasian dilemma. He tries to teach Elizabeth, who had been married to an Englishman, the same hatred of the white man that he feels himself. But Japan's "mission" in Asia is not convincing to one who can see its results.

This relation between Elizabeth and Hagamoto is the principal one in the book. The position of the Eurasian between two cultures is full of dramatic interest. It is capable of producing an exciting story. But because Hagamoto is too selfish to care for anything but himself and because Elizabeth has no interest in him except as a means to keep the hospital supplied, "Red Sun South" fails to engage the reader's emotions. Mr. Wynd treats his Eurasians more as problems than as people, and this is fatal to a novel, whose business is to engage the emotions. Elizabeth is understood but not felt, yet it is through her if at all that the reader must be carried into the story.

Mr. Wynd's insight into Japanese character, on the other hand, is often acute. General Sukiyama's pompous naivete and preposterous English are well rendered. The curious and revolting relationship between love and murder, shown in Mary's experience with her Japanese suitor, carries us close to the core of that ambivalent attitude toward the mother image which explains a good deal of Japanese behavior. The Japanese desire to conciliate and irreconcilable sense of racial superiority which soon led to wholesale atrocities when the conquered people failed to bow to it is well illustrated.

But these things, however excellent, do not make a novel. The flaw in "Red Sun South" is that it explains instead of creating. The difficulty is sensed first in the dialogue, where people seem to be explaining things to the reader instead of talking from within. Another symptom is the way the story fails to fill up the nearly four years of history in which it is set. The total effect is as if Mr. Wynd could not quite make up his mind whether he wanted to write a fast-paced and superficial adventure story, a penetrating portrayal of the Eurasian dilemma, or a journal of life under Japanese occupation.

Yet when all these things have been said, the book does succeed in recreating the nightmare quality of the years of occupation, and in rendering a picture of what we were fighting in the Orient.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

THE BODY BEAUTIFUL

In the thirty-three familiar quotations below, names of parts of the body have been omitted. Can you fill in the blanks? A score of twenty is par, twenty-four is very good, and twenty-eight or better is excellent. Answers are on page 31.

1. I dream of Jeanie with the light brown .....
2. And yet you incessantly stand on your .....
3. To be wroth with one we love doth work like madness in the .....
4. Silence sounds no worse than cheers after earth has stopped the .....
5. Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure .....
6. And then the lover, sighing like a furnace, with a woeful ballad to his mistress' .....
7. Reproof on her lip but a smile in her .....
8. Truth from his ..... prevailed with double sway.
9. How sharper than a serpent's ..... it is to have a thankless child!
10. Of all sad words of ..... or pen the saddest are these.
11. Blessings on thee, little man, barefooted boy with ..... of tan!
12. Into the ..... of death, into the mouth of hell, rode the six hundred.
13. Thy ..... is as a tower of ivory.
14. He was the mildest manner'd man that ever scuttled ship or cut a .....
15. I have a left ..... that is a miracle of loveliness.
16. ..... and the man I sing.
17. Hardly we learn to wield the blade before the ..... grows stiff and old.
18. Emprison her soft ..... and let her rave.
19. The moving ..... writes, and, having writ, moves on.
20. By the pricking of my ..... something wicked this way comes.
21. Music hath charms to soothe the savage .....
22. Fifteen men on a dead man's .....
23. Give, oh give me back my .....
24. But at my ..... I always hear Time's winged chariot hurrying near.
25. Her ..... exceeding small, the fives did fit her shoe.
26. He had a broad face and a little round .....
    That shook, when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.
27. If I can catch him once upon the ....., I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
28. A cannon ball took off his .....
29. Her rich attire creeps rustling to her .....
30. His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide for his shrunk .....
31. Her ..... beneath her petticoat like little mice stole in and out.
32. Come, and trip it, as you go, on the light fantastic .....
33. The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their

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MAKING OF LITERATURE

(*Continued from page 7*)

moves quickly into the utilitarian, where it informs without lifting the imagination, or records without attempting to reach the emotions. A history must focus within the margins of art, but the historian must cross them to follow our writers into the actualities of American life. He must write a history of the books of the great and the near-great writers in a literature which is most revealing when studied as a by-product of American experience.

Inside these margins are so many notable writers that the emphasis must inevitably fall upon men rather than upon movements and institutions, although these must not be neglected. There is available for discussion the enlightened common sense of Franklin, the first to make a modernizing Europe feel that there was a still more modern America. There are the astonishing intellects of a Hamilton and a Jefferson, arguing great causes in letters and documents which became the political classics of their times. We have the communicable fire of Thomas Paine, the most effective propagandist of modern times before Hitler, and his antithesis in the history of human liberty. In the youth of the nation, the art of style was mastered by Irving, suave in a tumultuous commonwealth. In the same decades, the equally great art of storytelling was enriched by Cooper, who added to the sagas of the world the heroic myth of Red Indian and pioneer. All Europe read him for half a century. There is the somber beauty of Hawthorne, the moral romancer as Milton was the heroic poet of Puritanism; the fierce humor of Thoreau's individualism; the shrewd saintliness of Emerson, who spiritualized expansion; the soul-plunging adventures of Melville's imagination; the prophetic Whitman, seeking and finding new rhythms in which to sing democracy and the future of the common man. We have had historians who were also men of letters, and statesmen like Lincoln who could say the word which makes aspiration articulate. There was Henry James, looking both ways across the sea from an Atlantis of his own creating; and Emily Dickinson, who saw eternity through the windows of Amherst; and Mark Twain tasting the bitterness of unchartered freedom while he told tall tales of an expanding America. There was Henry Adams, one of the great mind-searchers of our age.

It may enlighten the reader if he will think of the history of American literature as the record and analysis of a series of cultural waves beating in from across the Atlantic to our shores in a continuous series, and changing their form and nature and sometimes their direction as they sweep over the New World.

THE first waves that came with the explorers and the settlers of the seventeenth century retained their European characteristics with only slight modifications from circumstance. When the wilderness became new towns and organized communities, and immigration swelled into the floods of the eighteenth century, the waves became more numerous and more complex. For nearly two centuries they were dammed by the long walls of the Appalachians, yet their contour and content were subject to changes only less extensive than the novelties in the actual experience of millions of settlers now committed to a life in which opportunity, hardship, and danger were in equal proportions.

After the Revolutionary War, and the establishing of independence, itself a modifying influence of tremendous force, the wall of the mountains was breached in a dozen places, and waves from the seaboard pool, and new waves from across the sea, swept into the Mississippi valley and on toward the Western mountains and the Pacific. Here, in this vast frontier, the Colonial culture of the East and, later, the powerful literatures of what was now an old New England and a mature East and South, were fertilized by pioneer experience, dynamized by the sense of a continent in unity, and transformed by the needs and new imagination of a people no longer European. Sectional literature became national literature. And while new ideas from abroad were continually absorbed, currents typically American in their influences began to roll back toward Europe and the rest of the world, a process of reversal that had begun with Cooper and Emerson in the early nineteenth century.

By the twentieth century and especially after its First World War, the United States was no longer a New World. Culture was now not immigrant here except on a basis of equal

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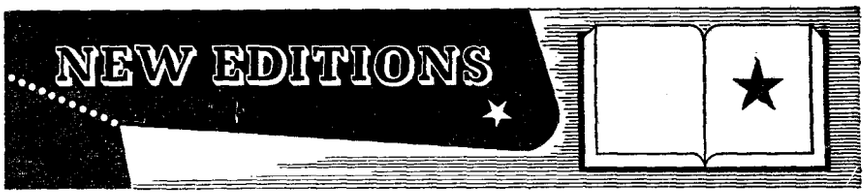
exchange, and the complex interactions of democracy and industrialism and the new struggle for economic democracy outweighed in importance any pressures from abroad. By the mid-century, American fiction, and the American drama of the screen, were beginning to dominate the imagination of the masses throughout the world, although of this striking fact the American intellectual was as yet scarcely aware.

The historian of American literature must tell the story of the importation into our New World of European ideas and shapes for the imagination. He must show that American literature differs from all the modern literatures of Europe in that it is consistently dual in the sources of its inspiration and its themes, and thus has a quality which will presumably be characteristic of the literature of the future in a world more mobile and yet more integrated than our own. He must discuss the seedbeds and carriers of our national culture as they existed and developed. He must set in order the progress from colonies to republic, from republic to democracy, from East to West, from sections and regions to a national unity. He must treat at length these regions and sections, and discuss the rise and fall of literary dominations, the schools and coteries, the prophets and myth-makers, the interactions of politics, economics, and religion with literary expression, and those strong impulses toward escape and refinement, and toward revolt and the needs of the common man, so characteristic of the United States. He must correlate American literature with the successive swings of this country, which sometimes have been toward an ideal of leadership in all human progress, and sometimes have been away from the world we have helped to make smaller by our own energy, and into an isolationism where we hoped vainly to solve our own peculiar problems. And whenever possible, he must pause at emerging writers of genius. For a history of literature, unlike a history of politics, can never be measured by quantity, but only by the crystallization of strong imagination in words.

This essay is drawn from the prefatory chapter of "The Literary History of the United States," edited by Robert E. Spiller, Willard Thorp, Thomas H. Johnson, and Henry Seidel Canby, with Howard Mumford Jones, Dixon Wecter, and Stanley T. Williams as associate editors. The "History" will be published in October by The Macmillan Company. Mr. Canby here represents ideas of the other editors as well as his own.



THE book which has come to be known as The Kinsey Report has enjoyed so great a popularity that a foreigner, visiting our country for the first time and observing this best-selling phenomenon, might conclude that Kinsey and his colleagues had introduced the United States to the facts of sex, even as Raleigh introduced Englishmen to tobacco. History, however, would hardly bear out this conclusion. It is true that Americans have rushed to explore the Report, probably eager to check up on their neighbors, and even more probably eager to check up on themselves (or their husbands) in comparison with their neighbors (or their neighbors' husbands). It is true, too, that the Report has proliferated remarkably in the shape of explanations, analyses, and abridgments of itself. But it is also true that the American public enjoyed pre-Report opportunities to read quite a bit about the facts of sex, even if it let the chance go largely by default. In front of me, for example, are G. V. Hamilton's "A Research in Marriage" (Lear Publishers, $5), first issued in 1929, and René Guyon's "The Ethics of Sexual Acts" (Knopf, $4), first translated here in 1934. I recommend both volumes to curious readers.

Dr. Hamilton, like the three Reporters, worked statistically in a limited field. His research was conducted with the cooperation of "one hundred married men and an equal number of married women most of whom" were "well under forty years of age, residents of New York City, and classifiable as having attained a relatively high level of culture." They answered between three and four hundred questions regarding their sexual lives, of the most intimate, penetrating, and revealing character; on the basis of which Dr. Hamilton came to a number of conclusions, the most far-reaching of which was that marriage has proved itself a less faulty institution than might have been expected, while much misery is directly attributable to "what parents and society commonly do to the individual in their efforts to socialize his sex impulsions."

In contrast to Dr. Hamilton and the Reporters, Guyon ranges far and wide in time and space; but their findings and his philosophy support each other. They have shown that local taboos and conventions are far less potent than has often been supposed; he questions the value of any sexual taboo, and argues that "almost the whole history of human intelligence, as it passes from the stage of observation to that of science, consists in the revision of conventions and taboos." As for a distinction between normality and abnormality, he dismisses the possibility with the radical statement: "Every mechanical means of producing sexual pleasure is normal and legitimate. . . ." No one could go farther: in Guyon's world, not only the bedroom but also the barnyard is a free arena. This license is based on the conviction that our "Aryan societies" are still too near "culturally speaking to the origins of human civilization" to have "discovered a definite and final formula for sexual relations. Those of us who believe that in "individualized love" something (and something that can endure) is added to a physiological relationship, must surely argue that Guyon himself is the victim of a large blind spot; but, however we may disagree with him we must find him sharply stimulating.

The scope and value of The Modern Library is well illustrated by three recent additions — "Alexander Pope: Selected Works," edited with an introduction by Louis Kronenberger; "The Sweet Cheat Gone," by Marcel Proust; and Charles Jackson's celebrated, gripping, and truly remarkable study of alcoholism, "The Lost Weekend" ($1.25 each). Mr. Kronenberger's selections are sound; his introduction informative and provocative. He finds Pope a better poet in his satires than in his other work, but I suspect this may be because the editor himself likes the *matter* of the satires better than that of the other poems. "The Sweet Cheat Gone" is the penultimate volume of an edition which, when completed, will be the handiest "Proust" available in Scott Moncrieff's translation.

Gordon Grand's fine fox-hunting stories, "The Millbeck Hounds" (Scribner, $5), have endeared themselves to many readers, because they are alive with traditional sportsmanship and a kind of sentiment that must, today, be called old-fashioned. . . . "Awake and Rehearse" (World Publishers Co. $1) consists of thirteen short stories which exhibit Louis Bromfield as a glib, but not serious, master of a popular literary form.

BEN RAY REDMAN.

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the Phoenix Nest

NIGHT EXPRESS

DIM are the sashes,
dark is the aisle;
ebony flashes
an ivory smile.

I love to travel
in nocturnal grace,
smoothly unravel
the riddle of space.

Rolling and swerving
on through the night,
veering and curving
arrow in flight.

Soot on my lashes
heavily lies,
smudging the splashes
of moon in my eyes.

Black are the ridges,
rivers are black;
golden the bridges,
golden the track.

Snore of a sleeper,
jingle of keys—
earth has no deeper
music than these.

Morning! reflected
light in a pool;
woods, unexpected,
fragrantly cool.

Dorsal and ventral
flick of a brush;
out at Grand Central—
on to the rush!

KATHARINE O'BRIEN.

* * *

Earle Walbridge remembers the following:

Back in 1912, one of my birthday gifts was a neatly decorated and lettered blank book in stiff covers, titled "A Booklover's Notes." There were thirty blank pages for quotations, which I proceeded to fill up. (I entered George Sterling's "A Wine of Wizardry" in its entirety, which I think is comparable to Eva Le Gallienne's contemporary feat of copying out Sarah Bernhardt's "Mémoires" in longhand. Sarah, touched, wrote an appropriate inscription in this labor of love.) I also included a three-stanza, anonymous poem whose stirring rhythm had appealed to me, I think the verses were written to accompany an illustration. It began:

Strum! strum! strum! strum!
Torches guttering, pennons fluttering,
Lances glittering in the night!
At a spiking trot, down from Camelot,
Rideth Launcelot to the fight.
Merrily, merrily, merrily chants
The Minstrel of Romance!

The other day, Mr. Thomas Larremore (whom you will remember from *Century* days) was showing me several books from Frederick Bursch's Hillacre Press. I opened one, "Tamburlaine and Other Verses," published in 1917, and a familiar lilt greeted me.

Strum! strum! strum! strum!
End to maundering, youth a-squandering,
Let's be wandering wind-swept seas—
White arms amorous, battles clamorous,
Cities glamorous—sing us these!
Merrily, merrily, merrily chants
The Minstrel of Romance!

At this period of his life, evidently, John Reed preferred Camelot to Moscow.

* * *

BALLADE OF BARDS

How many poets are here to stay,
Whose fame will flourish as time goes by?
A lot of people would hate to say.
And possibly that's the reason why
The pure, Pierian Spring runs dry.
Such awful stuff has the Muse been tippling
I can't help wishing she'd up and try
The rollicking rhymes of Rudyard Kipling.

Too much is written that leaves me cold;
They grind it out by the dreary yard
And, oddly enough, some critics hold
Such lucubrations in high regard.
For me, the going is pretty hard.
I like the lilt of a line that's rippling,
The major works of a Major Bard—
The rollicking rhymes of Rudyard Kipling.

Well, maybe we've all been taken in,
And maybe the lads who sniff and smile
At Danny Deever and Gunga Din
Are no worse off than the rank and file.
Old-fashioned prosody cramps their style,
The rules of syntax are much too crippling.
But they'd do well if they scanned a while
The rollicking rhymes of Rudyard Kipling.

Envoi

Salute a poet who marches on—
The same I read when a callow stripling.
For many a year to come we'll con
The rollicking rhymes of Rudyard Kipling!

LESLIE NELSON JENNINGS.

* * *

I am glad to give Frances E. Holmes, of Montpelier, Vt., space for this:

Undoubtedly you will be receiving a deluge of favorite parodies. Here is mine (author unknown to me):

FROGNAL LANE

They sound for early service,
The bells of Frognal Lane.
And I am thinking of the day
I shot my cousin Jane.

At Frognal Lane the service
Begins at half past eight;
And some folks get there early,
And others turn up late.

But come they late or early
I ne'er shall be again
The happy care-free lad I was
Before I murdered Jane.

* * *

MEHITABEL'S LAMENT

Cats given increasingly severe electric shocks or air blasts as signals for feeding will spontaneously seek these "unpleasant" stimuli for months after the original rewards are discontinued. If, however, the traumata are made excessive, experimental neuroses are induced.

—*Program note for the one-hundred-third meeting of the American Psychiatric Assn.*

You blew me some air
And gave me a shock,
Then brought on the goodies—
Budweiser, bock,
A slightly rare sirloin,
A mignon, filet—
Whatever you gave me I ate, dégagé.
Shocked and air blasted,
I gave not a meow.
I gorged (masochistic).
But look at me now:

You still give me shocks,
You still blow me air,
But when I come running
The cupboard is bare.
To you I'm conditioned;
To me I'm a dope.
The truth of the matter?
I don't give up hope.

But master, I warn you
To check my psychoses!
Excessive traumata
Will give me neuroses.
And where will that get you?
(My question's informal.)
Is a cat shocked and blowed on
By someone who's normal?

JUDITH KLEIN CRIST.

* * *

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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YOUNG MAN, GI student, born in Europe but whose horizons are as wide as the world, invites correspondence from young girl who is both pretty and sage. Box 15-B.

WILL EXCHANGE my beautiful, five-room apartment in Chicago for comparable one in Manhattan, N.Y.C. Box 16-B.

PENNSYLVANIA-DUTCH MAP, Berks county, historiated, 22" x 28", nine colors, $2.50. Box 17-B.

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PERSONALS

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 748

Reg. U. S. Patent Office

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

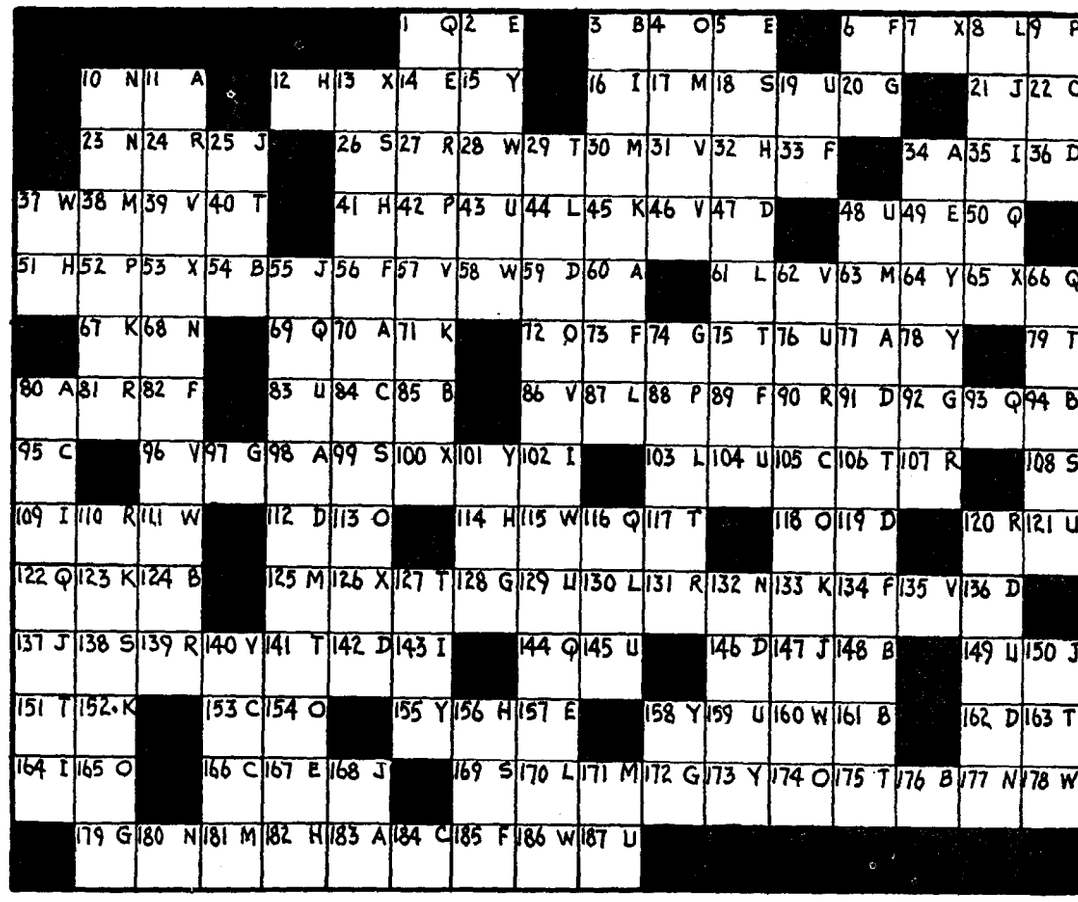
DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. French composer (1912-).	11 60 98 77 34 183 70 80
B. In Italian poetry a popular rhymed stanza, from six to ten lines.	124 176 148 54 94 3 161 85
C. Flowerlike.	166 22 153 84 105 184 95
D. City in Massachusetts once an important whaling port.	119 142 146 112 136 47 162 59 36 91
E. American librarian, writer of verse and essays (1848-1922).	14 49 5 167 157 2
F. City in Turkey.	56 6 33 73 82 134 89 185
G. To make precipitous or headlong.	172 74 92 97 179 128 20
H. Given to sober thoughtfulness.	51 12 32 41 114 182 156
I. At all.	35 109 102 16 164 143
J. The family consisting of the skates (zool.).	55 147 137 21 168 150 25
K. Japanese painter, Japan's first political cartoonist (1831-89).	45 152 67 71 133 123
L. French composer and college teacher in U. S. (1892-).	130 170 44 87 103 61 8

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
M. In Homer, the Greeks against Troy.	17 30 63 125 38 181 171
N. English poet, granddaughter of R. B. Sheridan (1808-77).	132 10 180 23 177 68
O. Juncture of the median line of the face with a transverse line across the narrowest part of the forehead (craniol.).	154 72 4 165 113 118 174
P. Noise produced by surf dashing upon the shore.	52 88 42 9
Q. German musician and composer, founder, 1867, of Boston Conservatory of Music (1824-93).	122 144 116 69 1 50 93 66
R. Kindly; good-natured (German).	107 81 27 139 120 90 131 110 24
S. Shaped like a pointed arch.	138 18 108 99 26 169
T. Utter insignificance.	141 79 127 117 75 106 29 40 163 151 175
U. To play so as to lose the trick to a certain opponent (3 wds.; card-playing).	48 121 129 19 83 145 159 149 104 76 43 187
V. A farce by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1671; with "The").	62 57 96 46 31 140 86 39 135
W. Pertaining to a citizen of a certain European capital.	37 58 111 186 178 28 160 115
X. The Greek hypophrygian mode (music).	7 53 126 100 13 65
Y. Language closely resembling Lithuanian.	101 173 78 158 64 155 15

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the DEFINITIONS each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 15 of this issue.

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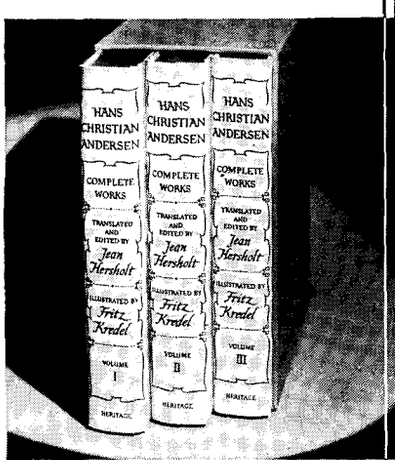

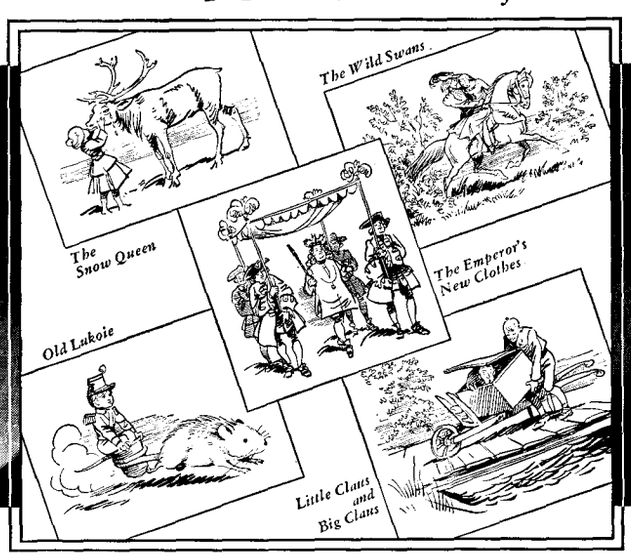

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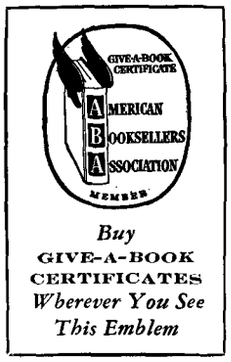

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